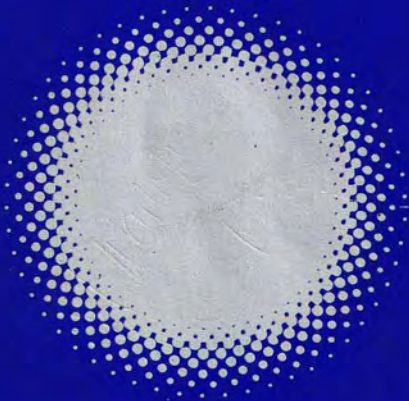


IDEALISM
AND THE
ENDGAME
OF
THEORY



Three Essays
by
F. W. J. Schelling

translated and edited
with a critical introduction by
Thomas Pfau

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STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK PRESS

SUNY Series,
Intersections: Philosophy and Critical Theory
Rodolphe Gasché and Mark C. Taylor, Editors

Production by Ruth Fisher
Marketing by Dana E. Yanulavich

Published by
State University of New York Press, Albany

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Printed in the United States of America

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For information, address the State University of New York Press,
State University Plaza, Albany, NY 12246

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von, 1775–1854.

Idealism and the endgames of theory : three essays / by F.W.J.
Schelling; translated and edited with a critical introduction by
Thomas Pfau.

p. cm.—(Intersections)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7914-1710-7 (alk. paper).—ISBN 0-7914-1709-3 (pbk. :
alk. paper)

I. Idealism. I. Pfau, Thomas, 1960– II. Title.

III. Series: Intersections (Albany, N.Y.)

B2858.P43 1994

193—dc20

93-26781

CIP

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Für meine Eltern

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Preface

In a profession whose numerous and diverse institutions and forums of criticism tend to demarcate intellectual identities in bipolar terms (say, critic vs. scholar, historical vs. theoretical inquiry, contextual vs. formalist analysis, or in philosophy, the seemingly never-ending tug of war between continental vs. analytical temperaments), introducing Schelling's philosophy to a wider audience would seem to place one squarely on the side commonly, if only by allusion, identified as the "conservative" sector of scholarly politics. Schelling's relative obscurity, being known, at best, to specialists in Idealism, continental philosophy, and to a handful of Romanticists whose proclivity for what Coleridge termed "abtruse research" rivals that of their likely conduit to Schelling, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, certainly would consign him to the expertise of that tactfully reticent species known as *scholars*. His unabashedly speculative and, at times, even mystical inclinations—often reinforced by shrill invectives against the plodding and hopeless work of historical and empirical research—would seem to identify him as the Idealist "theorist" par excellence. Finally, his terse, apodictic, and increasingly self-reliant style, gradually sculpting a systematic edifice of tightly interrelated and interdependent propositions, would seem to identify Schelling as a consummate formalist, one whose paradigm of truth is strictly homologous with that of propositional and, ultimately, grammatical form.

Far from wishing to repudiate these basic coordinates, whose critical limitations are sufficiently self-evident as it is, we ought indeed to accept all of these characterizations as *appropriate*. Yet at no point do they prove *sufficient*. For Schelling's entire career, itself so solicitous of, as well as resistant to, interpretation, shows his thinking persistently uncovering the hiatus that prevents such esoteric, speculative, and formalist knowledge from ever becoming *our* or *my* knowledge. What disintegrates in the progression of Schelling's philosophical writings—possibly for the first time in modern philosophy and certainly to an unprecedented degree—is the conception of a private, autonomous, reflective, egological, and anthropomorphic subjectivity as the *paradigmatic and principled foundation for critical knowledge*. It is, in fact, Schelling's insistent (deceptively traditionalist or conservative) pursuit of a formalist, "purely" theoretical, and speculative concept of identity—

indisputably the heart of all his thinking—that comes to expose the idea of “transcendence,” of a “trancendentalism,” transhistorical and transcultural mode of critical reflection as a metaphysical *symptom* rather than as a *principled* theoretical foundation. The discourses of knowledge, specifically those that Schelling inherited from his most proximate predecessors, Kant and Fichte, thus become the subject of a distinctly a-Hegelian philosophical narrative, one that is less eager to totalize by assimilating than to explore the metaphysical void that begets the totalizing desires with which we tend to identify German Idealism to this very day.

The following three essays by Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, then, are meant to offer both a philosophical profile of the arguably most complex figure of German Idealism and a challenge to contemporary criticism—in the ever more connecting “fields” of literary theory, Romantic studies, religious studies, and the study of continental philosophy. The task is to rethink that one notion to which any theory whatsoever is always already indebted and that consequently is also the most likely to unsettle the “ground” of all theory: *the concept of Identity*. With its ambitious beginnings, its fitful and erratic trajectory of relocations (both in a geographical and, in the eyes of many, intellectual sense), Schelling’s career and its corresponding, textual profile will, undeniably, strain and possibly exhaust our forbearance. Yet the three texts here assembled should, in the final analysis, also each stand on its own, offering, as the case may be, bits or rather large chunks of intellectual nourishment to Romanticists (particularly the 1797 *Treatise*), to students of epistemology and logic (most likely the 1804 *System*), or to students of the extensive, post-Enlightenment revival of religious, metaphysical, and mystical tendencies in Germany and elsewhere.

Schelling’s 1797 review article, eventually republished with some slight alterations in the 1809 edition of his *Philosophische Schriften*, shows the only 22-year old Schelling establish himself as a major figure on the then bristling and contentious scene of German intellectual life. Notwithstanding its sometimes shrill invectives, *ad hominem* attacks, and its frequently impatient and adversarial tone, the essay offers one of the more incisive interpretations of Kant’s first and second *Critiques* to date. In particular, the analysis of the concept of transcendental apperception and its problematic ground in and as a synthetic relation at times comes close to anticipating some of the arguments that Martin Heidegger was to advance, some 130 years later, in his landmark study of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.

If Schelling’s earlier essay may seem uneven—inducing most readers to opt for the largely cognate, though more magisterial exposition of his ideas in the 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism*—it nevertheless already establishes a tendency that would persist throughout Schelling’s later philosophical writings including the *Stuttgart Seminars*. Namely, Schelling immediately and aggressively tackles a philosophical issue in such a way as to let it simulta-

neously illuminate the general nature and practice of philosophy as a unique form of reflection. Thus the 1804 lectures, presented during Schelling's brief stay at the University of Würzburg, offset their manifest concentration on the concept of identity with repeated excursions into Idealist, Rationalist, Empiricist, and Materialist systems, as exemplified by Plato, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, and LaMettrie.

The *Stuttgart Seminars*, though often viewed as marking the beginning of Schelling's later philosophy (and his decline), still ought to be approached also as the work of a man barely 35 years old. Presented (and correspondingly simplified) to a lay audience of politicians, lawyers, and government administrators, Schelling's lectures appear to intone mystical and arguably abstruse concerns precisely when his private and scholarly existence seems most imperiled. And yet, notwithstanding the often hasty and overly generalized correlations and formulaic propositions advanced on that occasion, the seminars suggest that mysticism may prove a persistent and possibly inescapable issue for what we now refer to as *Theory*; indeed, its persistence may mark philosophical theory in ways more serious and inevitable than acknowledged by those who have dismissed Schelling's later preoccupation with mysticism as but an instance of bourgeois retreat in times of professional and personal adversity.

In sum, then, it is my hope that the three essays will make some contribution, however modest, to a renewed interest in the exploration of German Idealism, particularly insofar as its influential and ambitious arguments have a bearing on the equally specialized and highly variegated idioms of contemporary critique in the fields of literary criticism, critical theory, philosophy, and religious studies.

Even though working on this manuscript struck me often as a form of monastic withdrawal, its creation is revealed, in retrospect, to be no less heteronomous than according to Schelling all creation inevitably must be. Among those whose counsel, advice, and encouragement has been of much assistance are Rodolphe Gasché (SUNY Buffalo), Alberto Moreiras (Duke University), Bob Baker (University of Wisconsin—Madison), and David Clark (McMaster University). Assembling the philological apparatus, recovering countless primary texts and translations, tracing often obscure references, and most onerous, seeking to purge an earlier version of the manuscript of all errors other than my own has been the great contribution of Kirsten Jamson at the University of Wisconsin—Madison, and, especially, of Johannes von Moltke at Duke University. My thanks go to all of the preceding and to those whose help I sense on reviewing the manuscript, even if I fail to recall them at this instance. My most complex and long-standing debt, however, is to my parents whose steady support and quiet appreciation has so continually sustained me. I dedicate this book to them with love.

Glossary*

das Absolute	the absolute
affirmierend, affirmiert	affirming, affirmed
das Affirmierende, Affirmierte	the affirming, the affirmed
das All	the universe
Anschauung	intuition
Anstoss	check
das Bedingte, Unbedingte	the conditional, unconditional
das Bewusstlose	the pre-conscious
Contraktion (Gottes)	Concentration
Daseyn	existence
das Ideale, Reale	the Ideal, the Real
Inner(es), Äusser(es),	inner, outer,
innerlich, äusserlich	inward, external
Handlung	activity
Seyn	Being
Seyendes	being
Nicht-Seyendes	nonbeing
Potenzen	Powers
das Reelle	the concrete
das Wirkliche	reality, the actual
das Wollen, Wille	volition, will
Willkür	spontaneity

*A number of these terms are defined and contextualized in my notes to the individual translations; see the Index.

Editorial Apparatus and Standard Abbreviations*

- < > Text of the first edition of the respective essay and deleted in any subsequent edition.
- [] Insertion by the translator.
- { } Text added for the second edition of the respective essay.
- [1,400] Pagination referring to the *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. K. F. A. Schelling (1856–61) and retained in most subsequent German editions of Schelling's writings.
- a, b, c Footnotes by Schelling.
- 1, 2, 3 Notes by translator.
- 3,595/204 Schelling's *Sämmtliche Werke*, K. F. A. Schelling. This pagination is retained by most other editions; once again page numbers after the / refer to the corresponding English translation (see Bibliography to this volume, Section 2).
- A 107/135 Immanuel Kant, *Werkausgabe*; works are cited by Roman volume and Arabic page number; A or B refers to the respective first or second edition of a given text; page numbers following the / refer to the corresponding English translation.
- WL/SK J. G. Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre/Science of Knowledge*, each according to the 1795 version. The German text is to be found in volume 4 (second division) of the *Gesamtausgabe* (see Bibliography to this volume, Section 3). The English translation also covers the texts of the First and Second Introduction to the *Science of Knowledge*.

*References to standard editions and their English translations, indexed below, can be found in the bibliography below. Where translations are available, the German text is cited first and the page reference to the corresponding English translation follows after a slash.

- II,3: 355 Citation of the *Gesamtausgabe* (second division) of the works of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, not previously translated into English; all translations will be mine.
- 172^{ENG} Superscript ENG identifies a citation as referring to an English translation of a critical text by someone other than Schelling.

CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

Thomas Pfau

1

Identity as the Provocation and Crisis for Theory: [Re]Introducing F. W. J. Schelling

If we postulate a God whom we are to imagine as a living, personal being, we are forced to consider Him altogether human; we must assume that His life bears the strictest analogy to that of the human being, and that alongside the eternal Being there prevails in Him an eternal becoming; in short, [we must assume] that He has everything in common with man *except for man's dependency* . . .

Schelling (7,432)

God is not debased to the level of man, but on the contrary, man is experienced in what drives him beyond himself in terms of those necessities by which he is established as that other. The "normal man" of all ages will never recognize what it is to be that other because it means to him the absolute disruption of existence. Man—that other—he alone must be the one through whom the God can reveal himself at all, if he reveals himself.

Heidegger

Within the itinerary of German post-Kantian philosophy, which has traditionally elicited very mixed responses within its small Anglo-Saxon audience, Schelling still seems the most problematic philosophical figure to place. Unlike Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, Schelling appears to offer neither the distinctive *Propedeutic* or "groundwork" of Kant's critical philosophy, nor is he known as the author of one ground-breaking book, such as Fichte's *Science of Knowledge* or Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Instead, his seemingly discontinuous intellectual profile and his emphatically mystical and speculative overtones, beginning, perhaps, as early as his *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, have prompted an earlier generation of his readers to dismiss him as being largely of transitional significance, a mediator between the early, critical Idealism of Kant and Fichte and the highly distinctive, systematic qualities of Hegel's thought. Such a functional approach has also prompted the division of Schelling's

philosophy into a series of successive stages, with the logic of such a division often straddling the fence between the embarrassment of philosophical irresolution and a slightly more redeeming assessment of Schelling as the “Protean” thinker whose “phases” bear a complementary relation to one another.¹ Already a reaffirmation of the anagogical narrative of German philosophy “From Kant to Hegel,” such a reading of Schelling receives additional corroboration by a secondary, binary opposition in Schelling’s career; for Schelling’s intellectual biography can also be broken down into that of the young, brilliant, and highly visible figurehead of post-Kantian Idealism whose works were published vigorously between 1794 and 1809 and the later Schelling, brooding over private misfortune and a seemingly elusive “melancholy” of Being, who virtually ceased to publish after 1809. This silence, it is true, coincides almost precisely with the widespread recognition of Hegel’s intellectual powers on publication of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in 1807. However, as Martin Heidegger suggests, Schelling’s virtually uninterrupted silence subsequent to the publication of his 1809 essay *On the Essence of Human Freedom*, “means neither a resting on his previous achievements nor an extinction of the power of thought. If the shaping of his actual work was never completed, this was due to the manner of questioning which Schelling grew into after his treatise on freedom.”²

On the one hand, then, we face a traditional reading of Schelling as a mere “link” in the genealogy of German Idealism, maintained by the cognate historical narratives of Wilhelm Windelband, Nikolai Hartman, Richard Kroner, and Emil Fackenheim, among others; this is a reading in which Schelling’s philosophical shortcomings are explained as a temperamental issue, with readers pointing to the well-known impatient, nervous, and somewhat formalistic gestures of a thinker who seems continuously in pursuit of an adequate conception of philosophy itself.³ Fortunately, beginning with Walter Schulz’s and Horst Fuhrmans’s work, the last three decades have largely witnessed the replacement of this often complacent and indifferent portrayal of Schelling with far more subtle and incisive interpretations of his work.⁴ Yet even here the reassessment of Schelling’s work as internally cohesive still follows the cues of his earlier detractors, thus continuing to be organized by modes of inquiry common to intellectual biography. Accordingly even Xavier Tilliette’s magisterial two-volume study of Schelling receives its organizational cues from Schelling’s personality and his philosophical development, thereby preempting any inquiry into the arguably more significant question of what issue Schelling’s ostensibly erratic intellect might have been pursuing, an issue as apparently fascinating as it remained elusive.

In short, how are we to rephrase the overriding question or concern to which Schelling’s philosophy seeks to respond without once again fragmenting his thought into distinct and disparate phases? How, that is, can we pose the question concerning the “subject” of Schelling’s philosophy without once

again being alternatively distracted by, or oblivious of, the highly variegated diction and the kaleidoscopic array of intellectual motifs in Schelling's oeuvre? Although the scope of the following remarks will not be sufficiently wide to do justice to all the issues that any reassessment of Schelling's philosophical significance will necessarily imply, I do hope to identify this "subject" at least in a preliminary and twofold way.

First, the subject of Schelling's philosophy is, to some extent, the philosophy of the subject bequeathed to him by Kant and Fichte; it is their critical Idealism from which, must earlier than is often assumed, Schelling seeks to disengage himself to recover a more encompassing conception of *Being*. Preliminarily speaking, then, we can state that Schelling's philosophy does not desire to *determine, name, and totalize a principled presence and origin*, such as would reiterate the idiom of Kant's and Fichte's transcendentalism by seeking to systematize Being under the aegis of a *self-present individuality*. There is, fundamentally, no subjectivity in Schelling that would correspond to Kant's "transcendental unity of apperception," to Fichte's "primordial act" of self-positing, or for that matter, to Hegel's reflexive determination of "spirit" (*Geist*) as the cumulative integration of subject-positions within the "absolute concept."

However, to grasp Schelling's fundamentally different philosophical orientation in *positive terms*—with the eventual end of defining its appeal to audiences then and its relevance to audiences now—requires that we first retrace his sustained, incisive, and relentless critique of transcendental models of subjectivity (and the anthropomorphic Idealisms sponsored by it) in his earlier years (1794–1800). Precisely this *critique* of a self-present, autonomous, and totalized philosophical subjectivity (which Schelling persistently challenges in the writings of Johann Gottlieb Fichte) has proven to be a pivotal factor in the (re)formation of twentieth century philosophy as "Theory" particularly in the work of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Levinas, and Derrida, among others.

Schelling's critique meanwhile, is but the opening gambit in a philosophical career and a corresponding trajectory of writings and lectures that eventually leads us to an entirely different approach to philosophy. If we conceive of philosophy in a highly general sense, as a discourse aimed "determining" and "grounding" the principle of discursive *authority* per se, then the difference of Schelling's approach manifests itself specifically in that one notion on which all of philosophy comes to rely: *identity*. It is here, that Schelling's appeal to extraordinarily diverse audiences—both during his own, later years and within today's highly diverse network of critical languages—is to be found. Indeed, although it could be argued that the current complexity of discourses in contemporary theory and the rapidity with which issues are defined, recontextualized, and superseded bears conspicuous resemblance to Schelling's purportedly erratic philosophical profile, some concept of "identity"

seems to endure as a term that, if not always theoretically scrutinized, nevertheless continues to assert the "value" of whichever theoretical concept it has been made to espouse.

Schelling's likely appeal to religious studies, to debates in continental philosophy, or to contemporary critiques of the subject (a field of seemingly inexhaustible fertility), rests most likely with his radically speculative critique of a principled model of subjectivity as a fetish, so to speak, that proves inherently incompatible with theoretical rigor.⁵ Alternately, the diverse sociopolitical critical discourses concerned with "identity" (a concept frequently applied with haste or colonized by facile oppositions, e.g., essentialism vs. constructivism) might benefit from Schelling's theoretical probing of identity as *the one* paradigm that enables us to *think* difference while, at the same time and for the same reason, its sole purpose lies once again strictly in thinking *difference* (and not in establishing itself as an autonomous form of closure to the practice of philosophy/theory, e.g., as a "principle," "foundation," "origin"). Here identity proves central to the multiple critical discourses and post-Freudian debates on gender theory and "sexual identity," as well as on questions of racial and ethnic identity and the often concomitant inquiries into the constitution of cultural or historical identity of modern collectives.⁶

Meanwhile, in the often strained exchanges between continental and analytic schools of language-philosophy, it is once again the concept of "identity" that turns out to define the debates, such as in Jacques Derrida's and John Searle's "improbable" dispute regarding the work of John L. Austin, specifically the question of "semantic identity." Here the dispute converged on the principal question of whether it is a self-present subjectivity (an "intentionality") or an agency already prestructured by ultimately intractable and inherently citational ("iterable") discursive contexts and practices that accounts for or renders impossible the semantic self-identity ("meaning") of verbal utterances.⁷

On the face of it, Schelling may seem an unlikely figure to advance our thinking in such fields, given the ostensibly speculative, ontotheological orientation of his later writings. And yet, it may be worthwhile reconsidering the relative proximity of Schelling's speculative (and, after 1809, overtly mystical) conception of theory and the often hypnotic power that "theory" continues to exercise within the humanities at the end of the twentieth century.⁸ For both Schelling's reconception of theory and the contemporary discursive profile of theory obtain their force and thrust from a paradigmatic critique of the subjectivity that, for Fichte, was to be thought as (genea)logically "determinable" and as occupying an ontological rather than pragmatic position. Schelling's speculative and mystical conceptions of identity, however, define a unique moment in what we call theory because for the first time subjectivity

is no longer a self-transparent origin or (as Hegel still maintains) a telos; instead, it is thought (“speculatively,” to be sure) as a *symptom* in a process whose “quantitative differences” obey no fixed, metahistorical hierarchy of values. Any shifts in this process—though they may be constantly suggestive of a not-yet-revealed identity (much like the notion of the Messianic in the early Walter Benjamin)—continue to resist, and thus controvert the very possibility of, *authoritative theorization*. Notwithstanding their often conspicuous affinities, Schelling and Hegel appear irreconcilably opposed on precisely the question of how to “ground” the practice of theory itself or, rather, whether such a grounding is possible at all.⁹

The “subject” of Schelling’s philosophy may thus be characterized as a rethinking of philosophy once the latter has encountered the unreliability of the subject and—in a reflexive doubling back on that recognition itself—has come face to face, so to speak, with the crisis of its own, discursive authority. The subject, as the traditional, ethically motivated agent of rationality and reflexivity, and thus as the origin and telos of philosophical cognition, can nevertheless reflect philosophically on this crisis of its own position. Schelling’s philosophy, I propose, seeks to rethink the traditional inventory of philosophical motifs (logic, ethics, aesthetics, history, religion, mythology) from a position that no longer posits the subject as an origin or end but as an indispensable conceptual illusion or, at most, as a “medium” that in contradistinction from “nothingness” (*Nichts*), Schelling refers to as the “non-Being” (*Nicht-Seyendes*)—an absence which he interprets as the determining ground for a speculative turn in philosophy. Such, then, are the ways in which philosophy becomes theory, a slow and sustained attempt (as Nietzsche was to comment later) “to assassinate the traditional concept of soul . . . which is, to assassinate the fundamental premise of the Christian doctrine”; such an ambition, even where it hides its ultimate agenda from itself, inexorably leads to the self-erosion of any philosophical, extradiscursive authority, a consequence obviously welcomed by Nietzsche.¹⁰ To state, as Schelling did in 1800, that “history and theory are totally opposed” (3,589), is also, if only by implication, to deny the practice of theory any genealogical, narratable or representable authority.

However, Schelling’s philosophy not only *builds on* the collapse of an autonomous, philosophical subjectivity by merely referring, every now and then, to the limitations inherent in traditional theories of self-consciousness and reflection (a fact that is relatively well known and can hardly escape any serious reader of his texts). Far beyond incidental misgivings, Schelling’s critique of the subject *actively structures* his entire philosophical thinking as an absent principle (or, perhaps, as the absence of *principium* from philosophy). As early as in his 1797 *Treatise*, Schelling can be seen stressing the processual nature of “construction” and the primacy of “postulates” over principles, thus

insisting on the irremediable priority of “practice” over “accountability” in all of philosophy. Speculative reflection, for Schelling, thus can at most reveal how the transcendent or absolute might bear “an analogy with us” (7,425); hence the failure of a critical theory of the subject compels Schelling, after 1801, to reflect on the metaphysical implications of this impasse itself. In pondering what purpose the phenomenon of an irreducibly deficient subjectivity might serve, Schelling not only recognizes the *metaphysical* “ground” that critical theories of the subject at once seek to elide and, in the moment of crisis, reinstate; he also begins to think that the staging of finitude in its various powers (inorganic and organic nature or the various qualities of subjective self-presence) implies, at an ultimate remove, a corresponding failure of autonomy on the part of God or the Absolute itself. Reaffirming a striking analogy between God and the realm of finite being (*Seyendes*), Schelling comes to understand metaphysics as an inherently heteronomous practice, one whose “ground” can be found only in a relatively independent and finite differential play of “being” (*Seyendes*). That is, to think God is to imply a *twofold beginning* that continues to manifest itself in the endless play (albeit within a restricted economy) of the difference between “ground” and “existence,” *Being* and *being*, unity and plurality. This development of a mystical, profoundly arational notion of the traditional philosophical reflection constitutes both the dominant and most “modern” aspect of Schelling’s philosophy of identity and freedom between 1801 and 1811.

The following remarks thus pursue an argument about the “subject” of Schelling’s thought in a sequence of three steps. First, we need to reconsider the conditions of the crisis that vitiated Kant’s and Fichte’s paradigmatic constructs of subjectivity; for nowhere does the crisis of theory coincide as apparently with the crisis of the subject as in their discourse, and no other philosopher can be said to have shaped Schelling’s thinking as intensely and consequentially as Kant and Fichte between 1794 and 1800. Second, it is necessary to understand how subjectivity—rather than serving as a ground for an inquiry into the subjective conditions of possibility for the experience of Being—emerges as the salient symptom of a “metaphysical affliction” that a detotalized critical subject can neither definitively understand nor afford to dismiss as a merely incidental, idiosyncratic, and quasi-religious faith. Rather, the inherently finite and therefore heteronomous disposition of finite being and knowledge foreshadows a mystic dependency of the absolute, God, or of Reason on the otherness, the relative nonbeing, and on difference in general. The crisis of the anthropocentric model of subjectivity in Kant and Fichte thus is offered as the central piece of speculative evidence for the thesis that the self-presence of subjectivity (finite or transcendent) equally resists being posited or being negated as an ontological, autonomous, and principled “truth.” Moreover, as my closing remarks wish to suggest, Schelling’s thinking

in the essays presented in this book evinces that any discussion of the concept of identity inevitably brings into play a set of metaphysically charged paradigms about the nature of difference, relations, and an indelible desire that underlies all theories of unity, regardless of whether they are proposed in the fields of epistemology, metaphysics, politics, culture, or history.¹¹

2

Conditioning the Transcendental Subject: Synthesis, Imagination, and Time in Kant's *Critique*

The field of philosophy . . . may be reduced to the following questions:

1. What can I know?
2. What ought I to do?
3. What may I hope?
4. What is Man?

The first question is answered by *Metaphysics*, the second my *Morals*, the third by *Religion*, and the fourth by *Anthropology*. In reality, however, all these might be reckoned under anthropology, since the first three questions refer to the last.

Kant¹²

Kant's apodictic notation of one overarching issue as capable of reconciling the diverse and precariously isolated discourses of philosophy firmly prescribes the question of the unity of the human subject as the sole, truly significant issue to philosophy. Moreover, at least by implication, Kant's insistence on the eventual convergence of multiple philosophical discourses in one fundamental inquiry, that of a critical anthropology engaged in formulating an authoritative and universal concept of "man"—that is, a transcendental notion of the subject—also demands that this unity itself become something *known*, that it become *recognizable* unto itself, that it *reflect* itself. Yet to postulate a *reflected* unity of the subject, Kant realized, invariably opens the question concerning identity, the moment where the formal construction of a philosophical subject and its "ground" of legitimacy are to coalesce as one. Philosophical "grounds" or foundations, that is, must ultimately converge with that which renders them socially, culturally authoritative, efficient, or in Kant's words, "transcendental." Much of the theoretical drama and crisis in Kant's *Critique*—and certainly that part which most engaged his successors—lies precisely in its attempt of sublating the condition of the subject's unity

into the domain of the knowable, of philosophical accountability, and by extension, of cultural authority.

As is well known, Kant's exploration of the conditions of possibility of synthetic judgments, that is, of experience in general, proceeds from two distinct "roots," those of intuition and understanding. The synthesis of such intuitions and categories, which alone constitutes proper knowledge of phenomena, is identified with the order of consciousness: "The unity which the object makes necessary can be nothing else than the formal unity of consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold of representations."¹³ As Kant stresses, it is important that this transcendental unity of consciousness not be conflated with a "consciousness of self," because the latter "is merely empirical and always changing" (A 107/136). Indeed, self-awareness can never occur without our taking recourse to the already presupposed, transcendental unity of consciousness, which alone can establish the necessary, synthetic relation between the forms of *pure* intuition (space and time) and the pure concepts of understanding (known as the *notiones* or categories).¹⁴ Consequently, Kant observes,

there can be in us no modes of knowledge, no connection or unity of one mode of knowledge with another, without that unity of consciousness which precedes all data of intuitions, and by relation to which representation of objects is alone possible. This pure original unchangeable consciousness I shall name transcendental apperception. (A 107/136)

Historically and conceptually determined by the eighteenth-century oppositions between the sensible and the intelligible, Kant's definition of transcendental apperception contains seeds for a potentially vaise problem; namely, on the basis of this definition, "pure" consciousness in its function as transcendental apperception appears to possess evidence of itself only to the extent that it *coordinates* the "synthesis of apprehension" (intuition) and the "synthesis of recognition" in the concept (via the categories) in a third synthesis, that of representation [*Vorstellung*]. Put differently, there arises the danger that the "transcendental unity of apperception" remain something merely structural or aggregational, devoid of any intentional grasp and control over its own presence/unity. Should that be the case, the consciousness of transcendental apperception would prove less a philosophical principle than a signified of the relation among the three synthesis themselves. For the time being, at least, the *unity* of apperception lacks philosophical evidence (and hence authority), for it can come into view only as a virtuality, that is in seemingly contingent relation to (and, hence, merely *as* that very relation) the synthesis it is supposed to unite and exhibit. To serve as a philosophical principle endowed with evidence, Kant's apperception cannot simply *possess* unity but it must have an *awareness* of its unity so as to apply it to possible

intuitions a priori. Having been introduced as a constitutive, rather than derivative, aspect of the apperception, however, “unity” could become something known only if we were to have an intuition of it; yet, and here we come full circle, such an intuition cannot be adduced, because it would again presuppose a consciousness capable of synthesizing it into a proper representation.¹⁵ Hence Kant settles for a rather minimalist paradigm of unity; namely, by conceiving of unity as a strictly *formal* identity: “self-consciousness is a transcendental representation, numerical identity is inseparable from it” (A 113/140). To be sure, we must guard against confusing self-consciousness with ego consciousness (consciousness of self), notions that Kant takes pains to keep distinct; in the chapter on the “Paralogisms of Pure Reason,” for example, Kant expressly notes that consciousness remains “only a formal condition of my thoughts, and in no way proves the numerical identity of my subject . . . For we are unable from our own consciousness to determine whether . . . we are permanent or not” (A363–4/342–3).

And yet, the restoration of unity from a contingent effect to a principled “ground” is the subject matter of Kant’s “Transcendental Deduction,” that “Knot of the whole System,” as Coleridge put it, where “all men participate in one Understanding, each the whole, as—to use a very imperfect illustration—a 1000 persons may all and each hear one discourse of one voice.”¹⁶ Coleridge’s lucid and appropriately “social” illustration reaffirms that to “ground” a concept, particularly that of the unity of the subject, is to insist on universality, on the convergence of “numerical identity” (already asserted by Kant) with social authority. Unity of number is to become unity of voice: “one discourse of one voice.” Yet if the “Transcendental Deduction” is strictly aimed at demonstrating the a priori (i.e., universal) validity and sufficiency of the categories, Kant remains troubled by the fact that the material which the subjective apperception is to synthesize into representations (i.e., establish as knowledge)—namely, pure intuition and the categories—remains “quite heterogeneous.” This heterogeneity, it must be kept in mind, is not an effect of the empirical nature of things, for Kant’s transcendental aesthetics had already argued the essential priority of “pure intuition” (space and time) over particular sensation. Yet as regards the possibility of what Kant refers to as the “transcendental synthesis,” that is, the idea of a fundamental compatibility and correspondence between our spatiotemporal capacity of “pure intuition” (*reine Anschauung*) and our cognitive and conceptual potential, referred to as the “pure concepts of the understanding” (*reine Verstandesbegriffe*), the categories, the earlier question reappears. Under what condition can we argue for their synthetic unity as a *necessary* (a priori), rather than contingent, fact? Once Kant has established his inherently relational and synthetic paradigm of subjective “unity,” any explication of such unity is bound to regress to one concerning the conditions of possibility for “relations in general.” As Kant

puts it: "How, then, is the *subsumption* of intuitions under pure concepts, the *application* of a category to appearances, possible?" (A 138/180).

"Obviously," Kant concludes, "there must be a third thing, which is homogeneous on the one hand with the category, and on the other hand with the appearance, and which thus makes the application of the former to the latter possible." (A 138/181). Because the synthetic unity at stake is not generated by the categories themselves but regulates the successful application of categories to any possible intuition in the first place, it follows that such a synthesis must affect what Kant calls the "a priori certain formal conditions of sensibility" or "the form of inner sense"; namely, time.¹⁷ For whereas Kant felt no compunctions when conceding the impossibility of deducing from the unity of apperception any evidence to the "permanence" or continuity of an empirical persona, the interference between "unity" and "time" now reappears. That is, even the seemingly innocent postulate of a strictly "formal" unity of apperception requires a criterion of intelligibility and legitimacy; in short, "formal" unity—itself paraphrased as "numerical identity"—must be supported by yet another substrate. Number, that is, merely *assumes* or *implies* identity, yet as something knowable, such "numerical identity" must be grounded in *time*.

Unlike Schelling, especially after 1801, Kant conceives of identity always as an effect of synthetic, and that is to say *thetic* (i.e., conscious), activity, and thus he insists that "it is the synthetic unity of consciousness that alone constitutes the relation of representations to an object, and therefore their objective validity" (B 137/156). Identity presupposes synthesis, rather than vice versa. For Kant, all cognition is synthetic, presupposing the copresence in the "inner sense" (time) of categories and pure intuition, for "only in so far . . . as I can unite a manifold of given representations in *one consciousness*, it is possible for me to represent to myself the *identity of the consciousness throughout these representations*" (B 133/153). The passage again suggests that apperception is to be thought as the effect (predicative or discursive), rather than origin, of the postulated synthesis of pure intuition and the categories. The theoretical contours of the crisis by which Kant's synthetic construct of apperception remains beset are stated rather concisely by Kant himself: "the thought that the representations given in intuition one and all belong to me . . . is not itself the consciousness of the synthesis of the representations, it presupposes the possibility of that synthesis" (B 134/154). To prevent the "heterogeneity" of intuition and concept from disrupting the postulated, "transcendental unity of apperception," Kant must establish this unity independent of and prior to its act of representation.

Well beyond the more traditional, substantivist models of subjectivity (already discredited by Kant himself), it is the temporality of consciousness that threatens to unhinge the transcendental frame of Kant's analysis of the

subject. Hence any *tertium quid* meant to “ground” the reflected unity (i.e., formal self-identity) of the apperception will have to contain and subordinate—in the interest of the *authority* of Reason—precisely this phenomenon of temporality. Kant refers to it as the *transcendental schema* in his arguably pivotal, though also vexingly enigmatic, chapter on “The Schematism of the Pure Concepts of Understanding” (A 137/180). Here the “transcendental schema” reveals its truly constitutive function for the unity of Kant’s transcendental apperception: “This synthetic unity presupposes or includes a synthesis and if the former is to be *a priori* necessary, the synthesis must also be *a priori*. . . . As becomes increasingly clear, only the *productive* synthesis of the imagination can assume this task *a priori*” (A 118/142f.). Because the self-identity of transcendental apperception is not ordinary but, qua synthesis, always a derivative one, there is need for what Kant calls a *pure image*, which would determine and control the flow of time that is constitutive of the “inner sense.” Such is the function of the transcendental schema. As Kant notes, “the schemata are thus nothing but *a priori* determinations of time” (A 145/185), and he once again restates their crucial function: “What the schematism of understanding effects by means of the transcendental synthesis of imagination is simply the unity of all the manifold of intuition in inner sense, and so *indirectly* the unity of apperception which as a function corresponds to the receptivity of inner sense” (A 145/185f., italics mine).¹⁸ The function of the schema, namely, to ascertain the unity of the transcendental apperception prior to its synthesizing function, is apparent enough; however, as regards the equally urgent question as to what such schemata are, what evidence we could adduce for them (given that they themselves ensure the unity of apperception in the first place), Kant declines any explicit answers, preferring instead not to “be further delayed by a dry and tedious analysis of the conditions demanded by transcendental schemata” (A 142/183).

If, in Kant’s words, “the schemata of the pure concepts of understanding are thus the true and sole conditions under which these concepts obtain relation to objects and so possess significance” (A 146/186), the schema serves as the “figure” for the possibility of a relation between those “heterogeneous” elements whose synthesis defines the subjectivity of Kant’s *Critique* in its most fundamental sense. From a rhetorical vantage point, Kant’s *Critique* implements the “schema” as the veritable mastrotrope that regulates the distributive efficiency of all cognitive tropes (the categories) that, in turn, are charged with structuring the inherently entropic field of intuition. However, precisely as a trope (i.e., an act masking the projection or invention of an inherently unknowable “literal” inner essence as a belated substitution), the “schema” reinjects the very threat of contingency and theoretical illegitimacy into the Kantian subjectivity it was designed to overcome. Kant’s text, moreover, allows us to identify this contingency largely as the *temporality* of consciousness.

As remains to be seen, this problem goes to the very heart of the differences between Kant's and, *mutatis mutandis*, Fichte's critical philosophy and Schelling's speculative Idealism, respectively. Although Kant invokes a new form of intuition (the schema) to contain the disruptive impact of time on the synthetic paradigm of the transcendental apperception, Schelling will reverse the hierarchical relation between the subject and time.¹⁹ Time is no longer a purely formal, transcendental condition of possibility for experience but, as a *historical*, rather than formal, stratum it exhibits the endless subjective attempts at constructing an objective ("pure") identity. The schema in Kant is a micrological version of Schelling's epochs of history, that is, a sedimentation of culture in a form that is to stabilize the desired/projected self-identity of human consciousness through time. Similar to Herder's somewhat earlier, critical "metacommentary" on Kant's *Critique*, Schelling also reconceives of the schematism as a historical and, indeed, rhetorical phenomenon (rather than granting it conceptual self-evidence), precisely because it is in a constitutive sense linked to the historical particularity of language.²⁰

At this very moment when time and temporality threaten to invade the transcendental argument with involuntary, cultural and historical sedimentations, Kant's text itself begins to draw on a trope of identity; to determine the self-presence of a transcendental, "pure" self-consciousness as the synthesis of pure intuition and pure understanding, the schema must itself possess a quality that differs from consciousness itself: it is to be a "monogram" or pure a priori imagination" (A 142/183).²¹ The trope points up a tension between the systematic and the rhetorical performance of Kant's text that holds great significance for subsequent philosophical and literary speculation regarding the status of the subject.²² The figurative or rhetorical quality of the schematism—as such in marked asymmetry to the desired rationality and cognitive autonomy postulated for the "transcendental unity of apperception"—is also reflected in Kant's qualification of the "transcendental synthesis of the imagination" as a "*figurative synthesis*" (B 151/164).

In the rhetoric of post-Kantian Idealism, the concept that customarily serves to overcome this contingency of consciousness on a nonrational faculty (the imagination) and its performative rhetorical manifestation is that of an "intellectual intuition." And although it is correct and well known that Kant viewed this notion with great suspicion, in at least one point in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant seems to recognize the insufficiency of casting the transcendental apperception exclusively as a *function*. For, as we saw, a purely synthetic or functional paradigm for apperception eludes theoretical control and, moreover, proves but a signified of its heterogeneous components (pure intuition and the categories). Hence, and here Kant appears to be searching for an alternative to his precarious doctrine of the schematism, the apperception must be *aware* of this function as originating in its very own *structure*. In a long note to his Paralogism chapter Kant thus seeks to endow his "pure

self-consciousness” with the capacity of reflecting on its own constitution or, as Schelling and Hegel will put it, with being *for itself*.

As Kant argues, the proposition “I think expresses an indeterminate empirical intuition, i.e., perception But the ‘I think’ precedes the experience which is required to determine the object of perception through the category in respect of time” (B 423/378). In obvious violation of his own critical method, Kant here speaks of an “empirical intuition” that “precedes the experience” of its very object, and he goes on to qualify this intuition as “purely intellectual.” In trying to wrest his transcendental apperception from its purely functional, synthetic status, Kant has happened on the conception of an “intellectual intuition.”²³ Consequently he speaks of the “I think” as an “indeterminate empirical intuition, i.e., perception.” What, for Kant, remains a momentary slip effectively opens the path for Fichte’s radically new paradigm of subjectivity, one where the relational and synthetic conception of self-consciousness is replaced by a model of self-production. Thus it appears that the ground for the unity of all consciousness remains ultimately transcendent to this consciousness; as Schelling is to restate the dilemma of Kant’s (and, by extension, Fichte’s) *Reflexionsphilosophie*: “Everyone can regard *himself* as the object of these investigations. But to explain himself to himself, he must first have suspended all individuality within himself, for it is precisely this which is to be explained. (3,483/116).

3

Mediated Immediacy: Production, Recognition, and the Affective Grounds of the Self in Fichte

I am not what I am because I think it or will it; nor do I think or will it because I am it, but I simply am and think both. There is, however, a higher cause of their agreement. . . . I, however, that which I call my "I", my person, am not the anthropogenetic [*menschenbildende*] force itself but only one of its expressions: and when I am aware of myself I am aware only of this expression and not of that force which I only infer because of the need to explain myself.²⁴

Fichte

In many respects, German Idealism is a sustained attempt to consider with the greatest consistency and conceptual rigor the implications and unresolved questions of Kant's critical philosophy. As Hegel puts it, drawing on a popular distinction,

the Kantian philosophy needed to have its spirit distinguished from its letter, and to have its purely speculative principle lifted out of the remainder that belonged to, or could be used for, the arguments of reflection. In the principle of the deduction of the categories there is authentic idealism; and it is this principle that Fichte extracted in a purer, stricter form and called the spirit of Kantian philosophy.²⁵

Contemporaneous with Fichte's rereading of Kant, the initial phase of post-Kantian philosophy involved an array of statements partly critical of Kant (Jacobi, Maimon, Aenesidemus) and partly aimed at formalizing the perceived systematic and methodological implications of Kant's work (Beck, Reinhold).²⁶ Kant's conception of knowledge as a synthetic relation of pure intuition and pure understanding (i.e., the categories) drew criticisms that targeted both constituents of this relation. Jacobi, Maimon, and Schulze (a.k.a. Aenesidemus) repeatedly criticized Kant for reducing the question of knowledge to its subjective conditions. In recasting concepts like those of

causality or substance as subjective conditions a priori Kant had not only eroded the objective significance of these concepts, but he had effectively collapsed the possibility of determining the elusive "object" and, indeed, the telos of all philosophical practice, Being, by means of ontic determinations and ordinary predication.

Moreover, post-Kantian philosophers felt that Kant's reduction of the concept of Being to a mere "X" or *noumenon*, presupposed experience, that is, synthetic judgments, as a *fact* without bringing to light the general anthropological conditions that make such experience possible in the first place. A related objection concerned the fact that, in presupposing the experiential structure of synthetic judgments as the object of his inquiry, Kant never specified how the two constituent parts of such judgment, namely, intuition and the categories, originate in the first place. Particularly with regard to the categories, Jacobi and others felt that their origin as forms of rationality remained enigmatic, because Kant had essentially derived them from Aristotle without questioning their completeness. Still, none of these criticisms suggested any distinctively new directions regarding the question concerning the origin of our representations (*Vorstellungen*), and the possibility of a positive philosophical "step beyond the Kantian threshold," as Friedrich Hölderlin called it, remained uncertain until the arrival of Johann Gottlieb Fichte in Jena.²⁷ It is possible that, on his way to Jena, Fichte met with Schelling for the first time, and to some extent the beginning of Fichte's career as professor at Jena coincides with Schelling's emergence as a major philosophical force.²⁸

Fichte's Jena lectures from 1794–95 which resulted in the *Foundaion of the Science of Knowledge*, stress the anthropological roots of all philosophical inquiry, though not without significantly altering the question concerning man. Namely, Fichte no longer compartmentalizes the domain of the human by discriminating between theoretical, practical, and teleological reason (*Vernunft*) but insists from the outset that his *Science* "introduces throughout the whole of man that *unity and connection* which so many systems fail to provide" (WL 424/SK 259). In short, experience is no longer presupposed as a "fact," because "the *Science of Knowledge* must be exhaustive of the whole of man; it [experience] can only be encompassed, therefore, within the totality of all his powers" (WL 415/SK 251). If philosophical inquiry may have only one absolute point of departure, Fichte locates this point in the self as potentially absolute. The desired and potentially total "determination" [*Bestimmung*] of an individual, anthropomorphic consciousness—through it can exist only in that virtual state of a postulate—must nevertheless have taken root, qua idea or desire, within this consciousness with the very onset of self-awareness; and it is precisely this recognition to which Fichte refers as an "intellectual intuition." Contrary to Kant, Fichte employs the term to circumscribe a *postulate*, namely, to show "how [the self] could be determinable

through and for the self [Ich]". (WL 356/SK 190).²⁹ Well aware of the oddity of elevating a "postulate" to the status of a philosophical principle, indeed the very condition of possibility (and necessity) for philosophy as such, Fichte elaborates:

The self is infinite, but merely in respect to its striving; it strives to be infinite. But the very concept of striving already involves finitude, for that to which there is no *counterstriving* is not a striving at all. If the self did more than strive, if it had an infinite causality, it would not be a self: it would not posit itself, and would therefore be nothing. But if it did not endlessly strive in this fashion, again it could not posit itself, for it could oppose nothing to itself; again it would be no self, and thus would be nothing. (WL 404/SK 238)

Fichte's paradox displaces Kant's principal question concerning the a priori conditions of possibility for synthetic judgments in favor of that concerning the structure of the judging subject itself. Conscious of the charges that Kant's philosophy simply presupposed experience *as a fact*, Fichte scrutinizes precisely this assertion as a predicative act. As he remarks, any synthetic judgment assumes the continuity and self-identity of its *relata*; that is, it presupposes for its paradigmatic proposition, $A = A$, "a necessary connection [which] is posited *absolutely* and *without any other ground*" (WL 257/SK 95).³⁰ Because this connection ("X") between A_1 and A_2 cannot be grounded once again in A , this "A exists absolutely for the judging self, and that simply in virtue of its being posited in the self as such" (WL 257/SK 95); and because all judgment "is an activity of the human mind" (WL 258/SK 97), Fichte's inquiry into the structure of synthetic judgments cannot content itself with an analysis of the two constituents of such judgments—that is, intuition and the categories—but must inquire into the very being that posits or founds the identity and continuity of this relation in the first place. Therefore Fichte notes that "we have already arrived unnoticed at the proposition *I am*" (WL 257/SK 96). The shift from the $A = A$ proposition to the these "I am" is a consequence of the fact that the former proposition remains still necessary for another, whereas the I itself "is absolutely posited and founded on itself" (WL 258/SK 97).³¹ Fichte continues: "The self's own positing of itself is thus its own pure activity. The self posits itself, and by virtue of this mere self-assertion it exists; and conversely, the self exists and posits its existence by virtue of merely existing. It is at once the agent and the product of action; the active, and what the activity brings about" (WL 259/SK 97). Fichte conceives of self-consciousness as a primordial phenomenon that, because of this primordially, does not know its own ground. That is, self-consciousness precedes any paradigm of knowledge that would cast it as the effect of an intentional and controlled operation. Kant's analysis of synthetic judgments

and the “formal” identity that conditions the very unity of any possible synthetic judgment (i.e., the possibility of a meaningful, repeatable, representation)—which resulted in an increasingly more restrictive and troubled assessment of the subjective agency of knowledge (i.e., a pure apperception or self-consciousness)—ultimately demands a foundation that supports itself, a ground whose validity is proven by the fact that it may not differ from itself, that it cannot be defined *via* any other term or concept: the term proposed by Fichte (and marvelously elaborated by his contemporary and student Novalis) is that of *immediacy* (*Unmittelbarkeit*).³² As Dieter Henrich has pointed out, the conception of knowledge changes from that of a relation to one of production: “The act of production is here taken to be a real activity, while the product is taken to be the knowledge of this act. Fichte does assert that both become actual simultaneously.”³³ Because Fichte remains committed to the philosophical conception of Being as a task essentially cognate to the determination of the human subject (which is the critical point of disagreement for Schelling), it is imperative to *overcome* the deficiencies of Kant’s paradigm of a “transcendental reflection”; as Fichte observes, “in the course of this reflection on itself, the self as such cannot come into consciousness, since it is never immediately conscious of its own action” (WL 424/SK 259). Reflection, then, can never lay the foundation for, but can only clarify the phenomenon or appearance of a self-consciousness.³⁴

Still, the aporias of the reflection paradigm will not simply disappear once self-consciousness is conceived of as the correlate of a production rather than relation. Namely, the ‘I’ as producer and product, respectively, cannot be self-identical, for otherwise the operation, the “act,” would not produce any new knowledge but would merely repeat an already assumed familiarity of the ‘I’ with itself. If, on the other hand, producer and product were to differ, we would still be in need of a mediating criterion to identify them as the self-same. According to Henrich, specifically this conception of an originary positing (*Tathandlung*) fails to “bring the agent as knower into the picture.”³⁵ Although Henrich contends that Fichte recognizes the inherent need for mediation of his paradigm of the primordial “act” with itself in the later versions of the *Science of Knowledge*, this recognition already governs crucial passages in the 1794–95 version of the *Science of Knowledge*. To understand the early Schelling’s reimagining of the gap between the Fichtean “act” as performance and the reflective recognition of its product (i.e., the self) as *the proper space for a philosophy of history*, we will need to retrace Fichte’s fundamental argument somewhat further.

The first and most consequential proposition of the *Science of Knowledge* involves the positing (*Setzung*) of an absolutely subjective sphere; this act of positing an “absolute I,” we now realize, relocates the Cartesian *cogito* (i.e., the identity of the subject as a rational category) as an effect hypostatized on the provisional “grounds” of a subjective sphere that constitutes the condition

of possibility for any discrete subject *and* object. To recover this sphere, the "ideal ground" of the transcendental subject, for this subject (which Fichte continues to think as self-consciousness) is the task of Fichte's "fundamental" science (*Grundlage*). That is, the "determination" (*Bestimmung*) of the conditions of possibility for any theory of the subject requires that the act of self-determination be not only performed but, simultaneously, witnessed by a philosophical self.³⁶ Because it must be mediated, the determination (*Bestimmung*) of the self "through and for the self" (WL 356/SK 190) is restated as the postulate that "the self posits itself as determined by the not-self" (WL 362/SK 195); indeed, it is only through this mediation that the dialectic of thesis and antithesis (*Setzung* and *Gegensatz*) can reach beyond its conspicuous formalism and produce knowledge, properly speaking, such as when it permits Fichte to deduce logically, rather than borrow from tradition, the categories (e.g., of substance, accident).

The possibility of converting the production of a self (*Setzung*) into a knowledge of the product (self-consciousness) as the self-same, clearly hinges on the self-transparency of the act of positing itself. The determination of the 'I' as the "self" implies a certain awareness of unity by the positing 'I.' Any determination (*Bestimmung*) of a self through *and for* this self presupposes a "feeling" of determinability (*Bestimmbarkeit*). For Fichte, the "requirement for a determination to be undertaken within it by the self as such [implies] the mere determinability of the self" (WL 355/SK 189–90). With this need to render the act of positing (*Setzung*) transparent for itself the issue of representation enters Fichte's argument. If self-consciousness is the result of a production, an act of positing the 'I' as a self, this act itself must be represented for self-consciousness. "The self is to posit itself, not merely for some intelligence outside it, but simply *for itself*; it is to posit itself *as* posited by itself. Hence, as surely as it is a self, it must have the principle of life and consciousness solely within itself" (WL 406–7)/SK 241).³⁷

To replace the traditional, specular concept of reflection with that of a production mediated *for itself* through a stratum of representation thus implicates the fundamental issue of Idealism, namely, the "grounding" of the subjectivity of the subject, in the general problematic of interpretation. Classical epistemology thus takes its by now notorious "linguistic turn," a development most palpably demonstrated by the gradual convergence of epistemology and hermeneutics in the works of Schelling, Schleiermacher, and Coleridge. Recognition is no longer an *effect* of an inherently rational identity between the producing and the produced (i.e., the "known") self; instead the rationality of all identity is itself predicated on an act of interpretation. The self still possesses no knowledge of itself as positing "unless the intuition and the concept of the Self are inextricably bound together with one another. They are 'equiprimordial'."³⁸ As becomes increasingly apparent, Kant's struggle with establishing a "transcendental synthesis" for the postulated unity of pure

intuition and pure understanding, which for Kant constitute “indirectly” the unity of apperception itself, reappears with striking similarity. For Fichte must ground that unity which alone makes possible the synthesis of the producing intuition (*Setzung*) and the produced concept (“ . . . as positing itself”) of the self.³⁹

The “determinability” of all self-consciousness, then, hinges on the possibility of mediating the relation of production-product, intuition-concept with itself as a knowing relation. For Fichte, relations cannot simply bind together heterogeneous materials but, to establish knowledge, they must reflect themselves. This implicates relations in a form of representation, a ground or causality, however, that is not immediately readable for the consciousness whose specificity it conditions. In short, what (if anything) guarantees the homology of the postulated, original relation (producer/product) and the representation (intuition/concept) that was to promote the former to clear and distinct self-knowledge? To pose the question concerning the *structural identity* of the substantive unity postulated for the Fichtean ego and the evidentiary unity of its twofold representation as “intuition” and “concept,” is merely to rephrase the guiding Fichtean question concerning the “determinability” (*Bestimmbarkeit*) of the subjectivity of the subject in general. Because this determinability is to be understood as the absolute condition of possibility for self-consciousness “in general,” it must precede all mediation and objectification: it must find its evidence—a complementary “intuition”—in what Fichte refers to as *immediacy* (*Unmittelbarkeit*). Fichte speaks of it as a *feeling* (*Gefühl* WL 355/SK 190).⁴⁰ This feeling of a preconscious unity—the unity of the self as activity-passivity, producer-product, intuition-concept—must be brought to consciousness; that is, it must be *for* consciousness. Only a few years later, Schelling will argue that this “immediacy” or, as he puts it, “unconscious” (*das Unbewusste*) is not merely another hypostatized “ground” in the vertiginous trajectory of a strictly transcendental deduction that has come to resemble the exploration of Chinese boxes; instead, Schelling insists, this unconscious is everywhere *for* consciousness, not as its anthropomorphic and embryonic anticipation, but as a living “power” (*Potenz*), as the entire field of intuition that we customarily hypostatize under the title *nature*. That is, Schelling follows Fichte in according immediacy the status of a “ground,” yet he does not seek to sublimate this very ground into the subjectivity of human consciousness.

In some fragments and lecture notes from 1794–95, Fichte seeks to demonstrate the *essential*, albeit speculative, identity of the “immediacy” of feeling and the mediated transparency of self-consciousness.⁴¹ Hence the task arises to raise “feeling” to the level of consciousness. Such a movement, because it effects the specificity of a reflected consciousness in the first place, can evidently not be intentionally conceived, and in striking analogy to Kant’s recourse in the “Transcendental Deduction” to the productive imagination, Fichte also draws on that faculty as the agency whose performance

effects this mediation of “feeling” and “reflection.”⁴² Given that “feeling,” which Fichte essentially consigns to the domain of intuition, is inadequate (“mere belief”) as such, it must be conceptually grasped (*begriffen*) as the origin of, and hence as identical with, the very site of conceptual thought, vix., self-consciousness. As Fichte notes, “there is something in the Self, to be sure, [and] perhaps something belonging to the Self, yet not the Self as such” (II,3:300). This “something”, Fichte elaborates, is the “feeling of determinability”; that is, an “immediate self-consciousness” that possesses formal unity in time yet has not come to know this unity as *its own identity*.

To “raise the feeling to [the level of] consciousness” the imagination must produce a “figure” (*Bild*) of this feeling (II,3:297). Only then can the latter become an object of knowledge for consciousness and, subsequently, enable the latter to recognize this image as *its own self* and to reconcile the figural and literal representations of its own identity. As Fichte notes, such figural productivity renders the “imagination the creator (*Schöpferin*) of consciousness: in this function, one is not conscious of [the imagination], precisely because prior to this function there does not exist any consciousness whatsoever”; hence, Fichte continues, we must “form (*bilden*) this figure (*Bild*) ourselves” (II,3:300). In other words, Fichte realizes that the ground for self-consciousness constitutes not an aspect of consciousness but, rather, a “feeling” whose intricate filiations with a figural mode of presentation render it “at least partially . . . foreign within the self” (II,3:300). Although it is true that Fichte’s reflections anticipate Goethe’s and Schelling’s conception of a natural *Urbild*, we must keep in mind that Fichte’s system consistently denies nature any ontological status, and that precisely this refusal to concede the heterogeneity or alterity of the “ground” of self-consciousness accounts for the eventual irruption of a profound crisis into Fichte’s conception of subjectivity. What, we must ask, are the conditions of this crisis, and what “division” does this crisis (taken here in its Greek sense of *krinein* = to disjoin) reveal?⁴³

Fichte’s argument that a “figure” or “image” (*Bild*) mediates the immediacy of “feeling” and the reflective dimension implicit in self-consciousness with itself as a speculative identity, encounters two closely related difficulties. First, it is clear that that which mediates the “feeling” (self-consciousness as origin) and the ego (self-consciousness as effect) is “foreign” to both of them. The continuity between the self as origin and as telos cannot, therefore, be established by means of the traditional, specular paradigm of reflection (an instantaneous and unmediated, purely formal or logical self-relation) but requires an instance of interpretation. The “figure” itself, that is, must be regarded as a form of “presentation” (*Darstellung*) whose semiological status bears precisely the same, asymmetrical (non)relation to the totality of the Fichtean ‘I’ as the imagination that has produced such a “figure.”⁴⁴ Such asymmetry affects both the inherently material and particular qualities that constitute the “real ground” for all form and the equally empirical dependence of

the “image” (*Bild*) qua “form” on a code, a collective endorsement of its purported capacity to convert to knowledge (i.e., to impute meaning to) the affective and the reflective dimensions of the Fichtean ego consciousness. Not without anxiety, Fichte therefore continues his inquiry: “The (productive) imagination itself is a faculty of the Self. Couldn’t it be the only grounding faculty (*Grundvermögen*) of the Self?” (II,3:298).

It is significant that Fichte chose not to incorporate these highly volatile and destabilizing reflections into the *Science of Knowledge*, even though it is precisely the text’s key concept of the “determinability” of the human subject that they seek to elucidate. Similar to Kant, Fichte takes the revisionary decision to forego an extensive inquiry into the extent to which the self-transparency of the human subject is not only contingent upon but, conceivably, the effect of, the semiological and rhetorical (“partially foreign”) power of “figuration” (*Bildung*). Instead, Fichte mobilizes the ontotheological notion of an “intellectual intuition” as the criterion in which the subjectivity of human consciousness “in general” is to be grounded. By 1797, in the “Second Introduction to the *Science of Knowledge*,” Fichte will argue that “[intellectual intuition] is the immediate consciousness that I act, and what I enact: it is that whereby I know something because I do it. We cannot prove from concepts that this power of intellectual intuition exists . . . :” (I,4:217/SK 38). The philosopher thus must claim this intellectual intuition “as a fact of consciousness (for him it is a fact; for the original self an Act)” (I,4:218–19/SK 40). The entire dialectic of positing and negation—and the categories that are derived from this reciprocal activity—merely fleshes out what the intellectual intuition already delineated. Hence, as Fichte suggests, “the Science of Knowledge sets out from an intellectual intuition” (I,4:224/SK 44) only to discover how “reason is absolutely independent; it exists only for itself; but for it, too, it is all that exists” (I,4:227/SK 48). As Fichte admits, to presuppose the very totality that constitutes self-consciousness in order to deduce the latter’s forms (categories) for representation as autonomous production indeed amounts to “a circle, though an unavoidable one” (I,4:226/SK 48).

The text of Fichte’s early philosophy (1794–97) thus opens up, in “Of Spirit and Letter in Philosophy,” an indelible lesion within the very paradigm of “production” that his other text, the *Science of Knowledge*, employs for the construction of the self as an autonomous and self-transparent subjectivity. Quite surreptitiously, then, Fichte’s anthropological objective (“to bring unity and coherence into the whole of man”) comes to encounter its inherently “foreign” representational premises as a threat to what Fichte continues to regard as an indisputable fact: the inherently anthropomorphic constitution of subjectivity as the center and circumference of all knowledge. In short, Fichte insists on the homology between the postulate of a philosophical totality and its sole resource, that of a principled, egological, and self-consciousness “immediacy.” The young Hölderlin, an avid listener of Fichte’s

1794–95 lectures at Jena, appears to have noticed that the early Idealist paradigm of self-consciousness had reached a crisis point and that the condition of the crisis—viz., the intrusion of imagination, figuration, and interpretation—cannot, in turn, be recuperated *for* the Self and *as* this Self. In a letter to Hegel, Hölderlin comments how Fichte “appears, if I may speculate, to have stood very much at the crossroads, or still to stand there—he wants to move in theory beyond the fact of consciousness.”⁴⁵ Hölderlin’s critical remarks, which he also communicated to Fichte himself, not only led to the development of his own and unique poetical position, but they also appear to have influenced the young Schelling with whom Hölderlin and Hegel passed some of the years at the seminary in Tübingen.⁴⁶

4

Identity *Before* Subjectivity: Schelling's Critique of Transcendentalism, 1794–1810

If our spirit did not involve a [form of] knowledge completely independent of all subjectivity and no longer the knowledge of the subject as subject but a knowledge of that which exists in strict autonomy (i.e., of the unconditionally One), we would indeed be forced to abandon philosophy altogether; our entire thinking and knowing would but render us forever trapped within the sphere of subjectivity, and we would have to consider and adopt the results of Kant's and Fichte's philosophy as the sole possible ones.

Schelling, 1804

Schelling's early essay, "Of the Self as Principle of Philosophy," subtitled "On the Unconditional in Human Knowledge" (1795), seems to do little more than retrace the basic argument of Fichte's *Science of Knowledge*. The essay opens with a critical discussion of Kant's table of categories, which Schelling—taking his cues from the widespread misgivings of Kant's readers—views as lacking an ordering "principle. . . . We find that the synthesis contained in the judgment as well as the synthesis expressed in the categories is only a derivative synthesis." However, the necessary and "more basic synthesis," Schelling argues, "can be understood only through a superior absolute unity" (1,154/65).⁴⁷ Once again, then, the problem concerning the unity supporting Kant's transcendental synthesis (i.e., of pure intuition—space, time—and the categories) surfaces, and it prompts Schelling to re-examine the philosophical concept of unity (*Einheit*). By claiming that "the very essence of man consists of unity" (1,156/67), Schelling implies that this unity can be conceived only as something prior to and independent of any conceptual and synthetic operation. Schelling follows Kant and Fichte in understanding the concept of self-consciousness as paradigmatic for a fundamentally anthropological problematic. Yet already the stress begins to shift from a strictly "critical" or "transcendental" determination of the subjectivity of the subject to a more inclusive perspective, one whose expansive

cultural concerns gradually displace the technical idiom of Kant's *Critique*: "The revolution in man must come from the consciousness of his essence" (1,157/67, trans. modified), Schelling asserts, and "we must be what we call ourselves theoretically" (1,308/173). In short, "unity" (*Einheit*) cannot be produced, let alone be recognized, by an exclusively theoretical consciousness; and consequently even Fichte's attempt, in the *Science of Knowledge*, to posit the "theoretical determinability" of self-consciousness as an "intellectual intuition" remains inadequate—at least in such form—for Schelling. In fact, Schelling unequivocally severs all epistemic ties between an individual, anthropomorphic consciousness and the ground of its unity. This unity, he observes quite apodictically, is "a Being which precedes all thinking and imagining" (1,167/75); indeed, to characterize this unity as "unconditional" (*das Unbedingte*) is to relinquish any hope that this unity could ever be reified as a concrete entity for a consciousness and, by extension, precludes its reflexive identification as this self-consciousness. Having been posited as something unconditional, this unity of self-consciousness "can lie neither in a thing as such, nor in anything that can become a thing, that is, not in the subject" (1,166/74).

I

The most fundamental axiom of Fichte's *Science of Knowledge*, namely, that "everything that occurs in consciousness if founded, given and introduced by the conditions of self-consciousness" (WL 229/SK 50) has been decisively undermined.⁴⁶ For if "the condition cannot be contained in the conditioned" (1,180/84), the unity that effects the various syntheses of "all thinking and imagining" can no longer be thought of as a critical or transcendental condition of possibility, or as a postulate; instead, in virtue of its irrecoverably anterior relation to self-consciousness, such a unity can be conceived of only as categorically metaphysical in its provenance. Schelling thus rethinks the distinction between the finite form of self-consciousness and the notion of an absolute subject, claiming that "the I is no longer the pure, absolute I once it occurs in consciousness" (1,180/84). In thus conceiving self-consciousness not as an absolute principle but as a being incapable of representing for itself the ground of its own unity, the anthropological dimension of philosophy (i.e., its subjective impulse) serves no longer as a tool for resolving the epistemological, ethical, and religious questions outlined by Kant and Fichte. Instead, our anthropological disposition is promoted—as one of intrinsic "crisis"—as the most salient symptom of a metaphysical problematic. Thus the finitude of subjectivity, its "discursivity" (what Heidegger would eventually call *Umwegigkeit*), is interpreted by the early Schelling as the result of a Fall.

Rather than opening the avenue toward a “future metaphysics” or *System*, Kant’s and Fichte’s project of a “critical idealism” as *Propädeutik*, finds itself traversed by a devastating faultline. Its highly unstable topography unexpectedly reveals the “transcendental apperception” or self-positing “I” not as the autonomous, principled, and self-present summit of the critical edifice but as its abyss; the unity of the subject, until recently the designated center and foundation for a unified system of philosophy and its ancillary, scientific discourses, is found to presuppose its own identity. Unlike the first generation of Kantian readers and critics, however, Schelling’s response to the dilemma of a purely theoretical, critical philosophy is not to advocate its abandonment or refutation. On the contrary, precisely its failure, supremely evident in its aporetic mode of cognition—the “transcendental reflection” that presupposes the subject at the very moment when it seeks to elucidate the self-sufficiency of its synthetic constitution—*reveals the crisis of the critical enterprise as a symptom and as evidence of a metaphysical, post-Lapsarian problematic.*

Ever since Descartes, and extending all the way through the early Fichte, reflection has structurally embodied the very Fall from which it purports to redeem the human subject; for reflection invariably sets consciousness in a relation of opposition and dissociation to its object, and thus its syntheses can never reconstitute but merely presuppose the Being of a lost unity; as Schelling puts it, “mere reflection is thus a mental disorder of man” (2,13) and we can only concede it a “negative quality.”⁴⁹ Elsewhere he comments on how all “self-awareness implies the danger of losing the I. It is not a free act of the immutable but an unfree urge that induces the mutable I, conditioned by the non-I, to strive to maintain its identity and to reassert itself in the undertow of endless change. Or do you really feel free in your self-awareness?” (1,180/84). Unlike Kant and Fichte, then, Schelling regards critical philosophy not only as incapable of grounding self-consciousness through and for itself, he shows no investment in remedying this impasse by means of merely technical and supplementary conceptions, such as those of the schematism or an “intellectual intuition.” Although these notions reappear in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), they serve strictly as the “monuments” along the first, theoretical “epoch” of the dialectical pathway toward unity. Being historically relative to their particular epoch, however, they cannot, in turn, effect the closure of this movement itself. Already in his “Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature” from 1797 Schelling writes: “How a world outside us, how a Nature and with it experience, is possible—these are questions for which we have *philosophy* to thank; or rather, *with* these questions philosophy came to be” (2,12/10).

In casting self-consciousness and its anthropological dimension as symptoms of a lost, metaphysically rooted “identity,” Schelling’s early philosophy must recover its evidence from the domain of *intuition*, where such

evidence is no longer available through a priori concepts. Hence his philosophy of nature analyzes the form of self-identity in the material or unconscious world (*das Unbewusste*); Schelling here likes to invoke the plant as a representative instance of the very identity that underlies all conscious and unconscious existence. With all its various parts (leaves, stems, roots, etc.), the plant derives its life from the fact "that it is the absolute identity of itself as unity and multiplicity" (5,56). Only by virtue of this identity can concepts of understanding ever represent more than a given individual object.⁵⁰ Identity, then, is no longer the synthetic unity of heterogeneous elements (Kant), nor can it ever be grasped as the object of a reflection by consciousness upon its own act of self-production (Fichte), for it encompasses the genuine alterity of material being (*Seyendes*). The plant, taken as "archetype"—the *Urbild* theory that Goethe found so congenial that he used all his influence to ensure Schelling's appointment at Jena—is no longer the heuristic or logical *Bild* required for the mediation of the unconscious "feeling" *with* and as its own self-consciousness, such as Fichte had conceived of it in "Of Spirit and Letter in Philosophy."

Beginning with his 1797 "Treatise Explicatory of the Idealism in the Science of Knowledge," Schelling is concerned with rethinking "Being" (*Seyn*) in such a way as to preserve its material and historical autonomy as Being (*das Seyende*), albeit an autonomy that proves strictly relative (to Man). Being is not only the deficient dimension of *logos*, the not-yet-self-present concept that it becomes in Hegel but it is, and to a certain extent always remains, an index (in the sense of an "intuition") of the inherently finite constitution of the subject. Where Hegel stresses the *logical* dimension of reflexivity in the concept, Schelling emphasizes the concreteness and indisputable, logical anteriority of Being over the conceptual; and where Hegel stresses *totality* as the re-membered "truth" of the speculative and bifurcated movement of a "natural" and a "philosophical" consciousness, Schelling accentuates the *infinity* of such a process.⁵¹ As the last sentences of his 1810 lectures at Stuttgart already anticipate, a Philosophy of History cannot be written on the basis of an achieved totality; consistent with that position his next work, *Die Weltalter*, though repeatedly announced to be forthcoming would never be published during his lifetime, his last publication being, in fact, the *Philosophy of Revelation* (*Philosophie der Offenbarung*, 1843)—facts that starkly contrast with the evenhanded, almost suffocatingly self-assured tone of Hegel's historico-systematic lectures on History, Philosophy, Religion, Aesthetics, and Law.

Schelling's *Treatise Explicatory of the Idealism in the Science of Knowledge*, first published as a review article in several installments in the *Philosophisches Journal* in 1796–97, thus proposes a dialectical, rather than logical, reconstruction of self-consciousness by distinguishing between a given stage of consciousness and what, at that stage, consciousness is for itself. Schelling

refers to a specific *form* of consciousness, when viewed as corresponding with the unconditional identity of the absolute, as *spirit* [Geist]. Consciousness qua spirit therefore is analyzed independent of any object relation: "As spirit [Geist] I designate that which is only its own object. . . . Spirit can only be apprehended in its activity" (1,366–7). Already a year earlier, in his *Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism*, Schelling had remarked how "we awaken through reflection," and if reflection indeed effects a consciousness of self, such a "return to ourselves . . . is [not] thinkable without resistance, no reflection without an object" (1,325/185). From a philosophical perspective—which is primarily concerned with questions of evidence and its representation—this return into itself by consciousness must also reveal the ground of unity for consciousness. How else—the argument is familiar—could consciousness recognize the reflection as its own?

For the first time, to overcome the Kantian and Fichtean impasse, the analytical concept of reflection is replaced by a dialectical one whereby the initial consciousness of an object now appears as the object for the philosophical narrative itself.⁵² Surely, any interiority of consciousness, including its dynamic or "active" construction-representation of an object, can become knowable (i.e., conscious) only through a reflection on the form of its own existence. Its existence, Schelling admits—up to this point still in agreement with Fichte—lies in its capacity to act, to be active, by constructing its world relative to itself. This reflexive inversion, meanwhile, "repeat[s] this mode of activity [*Handlungsweise*] with freedom" (1,371); and precisely this reflective doubling back unto itself announces the arrival of speculative "truth" in consciousness. For Schelling, "only a force returning into itself creates an interiority" (1,379), and simultaneously, "in its tendency toward self-inspection [*Selbstanschauung*] the spirit limits itself" (1,380). This very capacity of reflection not only to "separate what nature had united forever" (2,13), but also to isolate the forms of Geist in the material of finite consciousness marks the emergence of history and of a certain form of temporality in the Romantic speculation on self-consciousness:

All acts of the spirit thus aim at presenting the infinite within the finite. The goal of all these actions is self-consciousness, and their history is none other than the history of self-consciousness. Every act of the soul is also a determinate stage of the soul. Hence the history of the human spirit will prove none other than the history of the different stages in passing through which it progressively attains an intuition of itself. . . . The external world lies unfolded before us, so that we may rediscover within it the history of our spirit. Hence philosophy cannot rest until it has accompanied the spirit to the goal of all its striving, to self-consciousness. (1,382f.)⁵³

History, for Schelling, is to be understood as the progressive recovery of the speculative content (i.e., "spirit") in the relatively autonomous forms and material sedimentations of our anthropomorphic self-consciousness (i.e., material nature, feeling, reflection, and the will). Though still Fichtean in much of its argument, the 1797 *Treatise* radically reconceives the relation between subject and ground as one of *identity* rather than as a unity that remains grounded in the synthetic power of Kant's "productive imagination" or in the apodictic evidence of Fichte's "intellectual intuition."⁵⁴

II

The consummate formulation of Schelling's dialectical conception of subjectivity occurs in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), a text in which Schelling is particularly concerned with pointing out the strict continuity between the theoretical and the practical conception of reason, an intention he shares with Fichte. Yet as he revisits his earlier postulate that "we must be what we call ourselves theoretically" (1,308/173), Schelling also breaks decisively with Fichte's strictly logical construction of the self. Unlike Fichte's system, particularly in its revised version of the *Science of Knowledge* of 1797, Schelling's *System* seeks philosophical truth not in the propositional grammar of an individual, anthropomorphic consciousness and its (self-)grounding, purely positional "act" (*Tathandlung*). Instead, the *System* aims at rendering the very debris of such a "grammar" or knowledge legible as the "trace" of an agency or absolute ("Being" as the identity of subject and object) of whose plenitude a strictly egological consciousness or anthropomorphic self can never fully partake. In other words, the discrete stages of a purely theoretical consciousness are reinterpreted as discrete stages in a temporal and narrative trajectory whose "truth" or "meaning" coincides in all respects with its Being. Hence, as we shall see, Schelling does not seek to render it "knowable" through the traditional, deictic or referential model of a propositional grammar. Truth, from here on, emerges not *by means of* but, instead, *through the failure of* such a model of representation.

As a theoretical agency, human consciousness works progressively, albeit unawares, toward realizing the ground of its unity (Being), one it can never properly "know" as a discrete subject. Still, being effectively constrained by the practical postulate (whose subjective form lies in the "will") that it *ought* to render the ground of its own being intelligible, consciousness gradually assembles a trajectory of discrete stages, each linked to the next by an instance of theoretical crisis. What, from the perspective of an anthropomorphic consciousness, seems merely the debris of failed paradigms of self-cognition, becomes legible and meaningful as the history of a spirit whose

ultimate telos we are to locate in the convergence or, rather, coalescence of the *form* with the *object* of knowledge, of ground and Being, of the theoretical with the practical. We are offered a temporal rather than logical conception of the subject, a subject whose epistemic forms as a theoretical *consciousness* will reveal themselves as the very content of a dialectical and historical progression for the *spirit*. As such, the logical forms merely extend what, according to Schelling, can already be found in nature; namely, that nature or the unconscious proves structurally cognate with the first "epoch" of the spirit. Understood as "a progressive history of self-consciousness," this dialectic also reveals "the parallelism of nature with intelligence. . . . For in this work it will become apparent, that the same powers of intuition which reside in the self can also be exhibited up to a certain point in nature" (3,331f./2f.). Once again, it proves essential that the spirit "is to inspect not these products [*natura naturata*] but itself *within* these products," that is, its activity [*natura naturans*], as Schelling's 1797 *Treatise* had put it (1,390). In the words of one critic, "Schelling is able to combine Fichte's opposing philosophies of Idealism and Realism (Dogmatism) because for him nature has become an unconscious power [*Potenz*] of reflective life itself."⁵⁵ Indeed, Schelling repeatedly designates his 1800 *System* as a "Real-Idealism" (3,386/42).

The *System* (1800) opens with the familiar Fichtean claim that the "concept of the self arises through the act of self-consciousness, and thus apart from this act the self is nothing" (3,366/25). Such a postulate regarding self-consciousness not only implies the formal identity of self-consciousness ($A = A$) but, as a synthetic proposition, it also asserts the existence of the self (I am). At first, little seems to have changed since Fichte advanced his ostensibly identical proposition from Part I of the 1795 *Science of Knowledge*. Schelling reiterates the originally Kantian distinction, also retained by Fichte, between the formal and *analytic* unity of the self, which is expressed in the proposition 'A = A,' and the *synthetic* unity, which we assume as soon as we predicate the self's existence (e.g., [*I = I*] or 'I Am'). Unlike Kant or Fichte, however, Schelling does not believe in the possibility of deducing one from the other, and he shows even impatience with Fichte's conception of being (*Seyendes*) as strictly a derivative 'notion' or effect of the purely positional "act" or self-assertion.

Not only can consciousness, according to Schelling, not know the grounds for its own unity, but any paradigm of unity, if it is to be capable of "truth," cannot in turn coopt an oppositional logic, such as it persists in Kant's distinction between analytic and synthetic unity. What confers truth on unity is an *identity* in relation to which the human subject qua self-consciousness functions not as a proprietor but as a medium and effect. As Schelling seeks to demonstrate throughout this text, philosophy itself evolves as a dramatic narrative, offering us a progressive revelation of the very identity that sustained (even as it is being obscured by) the seemingly

endless struggle between formal and material, immanent and extrinsic, analytical and synthetic paradigms of knowledge and propositional coherence or unity. The dialectic of the *System* is thus designed to uncover an "original duplicity [*ursprüngliche Duplizität*] within the identity" (3,373/30). Schelling continues: "From this original duality in itself there unfolds for the self everything objective that enters its consciousness; and it is only that original identity in the duality which brings unification and connection into all synthetic knowledge" (3,374/31).⁵⁶ This duality remains as long as self-consciousness has not yet set itself into a knowing relation (absolute reflection) to its formal-analytical ($A = A$) and to its material and synthetic ($I = I$, hence "I am") unity as *its own*. With its unity remaining contingent on the forever deferred reconciliation of its ethical and its material sense of unity, of its "limiting activity and the activity limited" (3,391/43), self-consciousness will remain the site of an "infinite conflict" (3,398/50) between the competing paradigms of Idealism-Realism, Transcendentalism-Skepticism, and so forth.

Clearly, the identity that binds together these activities as parts of the same self cannot, in turn, ever become an object for this very consciousness. Hence Schelling refers to it as the correlate of an act "which, since it is the condition of all limitation and consciousness, does not itself come to consciousness" (3,395/47). So, if no philosophical presentation of this identity is conceivable within a strictly theoretical idiom, Schelling's dialectics must evolve strictly as "the free imitation, the free recapitulation of the original series of acts into which the one act of self-consciousness evolves" (3,397/49). The demonstration of this absolute identity takes the form of a *repetition* whereby stages of consciousness become the object of analysis. In apparent imitation of the Platonic concept of *anamnesis*, Schelling thus speaks of a "twofold series" (*doppelte Reihe*) 3,397/49) of consciousness, and he continues: "Philosophy is thus a history of self-consciousness, having various epochs, and by means of it that one absolute synthesis is successively put together" (3,399/50).⁵⁷ In clear prefiguration of Schelling's later philosophy of history, the *System* (1800) distinguishes between three epochs through which the Identity or Absolute progressively reveals itself as the unifying ground for the formal and material unity of human consciousness, respectively. In this dialectical progression consciousness evolves from (1) a state of primordial sensation to one of productive intuition, (2) from intuition to reflection and to the absolute act of will, which constitutes the beginning of the third epoch.

For the first two of these epochs, Schelling can still point to a corresponding form within nature, namely, unconscious matter and, subsequently, the organic forms of life (3,490 ff./122 ff.). However, for the last epoch, wherein the spirit has attained the form of the will, no corresponding power in nature can be determined, because, when considered in a formal sense, the will no longer constitutes a synthetic activity. Instead, in reflecting on the act

of reflection itself—itsself the culminating point of all synthetic (purely theoretical) practice—human consciousness qua will assumes an analytic relation to its former, synthetic acts; that is synthetic acts are now remembered and interiorized (*erinnert*) as the past forms of the spirit. At the corresponding moment in the “transcendental deduction” of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant had introduced the power of the “imagination” and its “transcendental schemata” to effect the “transcendental synthesis” that the “unity of apperception” had merely presupposed. Schelling at this point in his *System* also makes reference to the schematism, yet he insists that it, too, must be understood as but a passing form within the dialectical progression of the spirit. In contrast to Kant, Schelling can thus no longer posit the schemata as “a priori determinations of time” (A145/185) but, on the contrary, comes to view the schematism itself as an inherently temporal stage or “form” of consciousness.

For Schelling, that is, the technologies of self-knowledge and, by extension of knowledge as method, institution, and generally as cultural and social force, remain subordinate to time and, because time can no longer be thought under the aegis of formal logic, that means to *historical time*; hence these “technologies of knowledge” prove by definition incapable of “truth” and, indeed, lay bare a division within the discipline of philosophy between a single, monolithic, quasi-ontological perspective and multiple, heteronomous, and competing hermeneutic perspectives on the question of Being. In a highly astute analysis that develops with much acumen a similar argument from the 1797 *Treatise Explicatory of the Idealism in the Science of Knowledge*, Schelling shows how the division among the various Kantian categories had already been temporally marked. Focusing on the categories of relation, Schelling notes how the first of these, that of substance and accident, can reach beyond the formal dyad of a logical subject and predicate only because its application is regulated by a second category of relation: causality and effect. Hence, Schelling concludes, “the opposition obtaining between the first two categories is the same as that obtaining between space and time.” For it is only through the second category that “we add the transcendental schema of time” (3,521/146). Contrary to Kant, however, Schelling resituates the third category of relation, that of “reciprocity between agent and patient,” within a temporal rather than logical frame. Because the transition from the “intuitionless concept” (first category) to the “conceptless intuition” (second category) “is possible only through the schematism of time, we conclude that time, too, must have already entered into that original synthesis” (3,523/148). This schematism of time Schelling also calls a *transcendental abstraction* and as such it constitutes “the condition of judgment, but not judgment itself” (3,516/142). However, because “the condition does not come to consciousness prior to the conditioned” (3,523/148), Kant’s theory of the pure concepts of understanding (i.e., the categories) proves the result of an “abstraction” that remains inaccessible to a purely

theoretical consciousness such as that of Kant's apperception. Schelling thus interprets this abstraction as an absolute act of will:

But now it is obvious that only by also becoming conscious of transcendental abstraction could the self first elevate itself absolutely, for itself, above the object (. . .) and that only by elevating itself above any object, could it recognize itself as an intelligence. But now this act is an absolute abstraction and, precisely because it is absolute, can no longer be explained through any other in the intelligence; and hence at this point the chain of theoretical philosophy breaks off, and there remains in regard to it only the absolute demand: there *shall* appear such an act in the intelligence. But in so saying, theoretical philosophy oversteps its boundary, and crosses into the domain of practical philosophy, which alone posits by means of categorical demands. (3,224/149)

Schelling's passage—as indeed his extended analogy between philosophy's and geometry's reliance on "postulates" in the "Appendix" to his 1797 *Treatise* and in the 1800 *System*—shows the "infinite conflict" within theoretical self-consciousness to stem from the impossibility of *knowing* the identity that binds together the limiting (ideal) and the limited (real) acts of this consciousness itself. Hence, Schelling notes, "throughout the whole of theoretical philosophy we have seen the endeavour of the intelligence to become aware of its action as such, persistently fail" (3,536/158); and the world of theoretical consciousness whose origins are rooted in intuition "falls . . . behind consciousness" and thus "falls altogether outside time" (3,537/159). By contrast, the practical self-consciousness no longer opposes these ideal and real acts of intuition and understanding but, as an "idealizing" form, it contemplates this very opposition itself. For here "by an absolute act[,] the intelligence elevates itself above everything objective" (3,525/149). Thus "absolute abstraction, i.e., the beginning of consciousness, is explicable only through a self-determining, or an act of the intelligence upon itself" (3,532/155). As Schelling elaborates, the "absolute act of will" and practical self-consciousness "cannot simply express a concept in the object, but by free action must express therein a concept of the concept." The objects of practical consciousness no longer amount to mere entities, ascribed to an outside world with which the understanding maintains only a reflective, antithetical relation. Instead these objects must be inherently reflexive themselves, for the self can become conscious of the act of will as its *own* act "only in that an object of intuition becomes the visible expression of its willing" (3,557/175).

Schelling thus must introduce an object that is independent of the act of will, for it is to render the latter intuitable for a self-conscious subject without, however, being qualitatively heterogeneous or extrinsic to this self-consciousness. "Products of this kind are the ideas" (3,559/176) Schelling

asserts, and their corresponding intuitional form can be found in art."⁵⁸ As a product of the imagination, as the faculty "wavering between finitude and infinity," art expresses the "concept of a concept" and thus impels "reflection immediately to an *intelligence outside itself*" (3,554/172). Although superior to the merely theoretical opposition between the ideal and the real (*ideell-reell*), art and the idea—the intuition and concept complementing the practical stage of the spirit as an unconditional act of will—cannot resolve the question of self-consciousness in its entirety:

But now how, in willing, the self makes the transition, even in thought from the Idea to the determinate object (for how such a transition may be objectively possible is still not in question at all), is beyond comprehension, unless there is again some intermediary which is for acting precisely what in thinking the symbol is for ideas, or the schema for concepts. This mediating factor is the *ideal*. (3,559/176)

To be knowable by consciousness as *its own* authentic ground (i.e., in and of itself), each notion that is introduced as the prospective ground of unity (i.e., as the absolute identity) for self-consciousness requires that it be mediated, as intuition or representation. This by now familiar constraint in the competing, idealist models of subjectivity, extends into the domain of freedom, with practical reason and art functioning as its conceptual and intuitional pillars, respectively. Here again, then, Schelling's dialectic seeks to uncover the temporal and historical significance of the will and aesthetic "presentation" (*Darstellung*) of its ideas. The conversion of the will into a symbolic form of intuition—itsself patterned as a temporal succession of the various forms and genres of art—enables the by definition belated, analeptic narrative of the dialectician to inspect the import of truth within the productions of a finite consciousness. It is, in short, the by now familiar reversal of an act into a *form* of human consciousness, the exegesis of a product as the "trace" of a vanished or, rather, unrepresentable absolute Being (*Seyn*).

In the final analysis, such a dialectical schema must confront its own enabling condition, that is, a certain paradigm of historical time; and indeed, Schelling remarks, such a dialectical reversal "will lead us to a philosophy of *history*, which latter is for the practical part of philosophy precisely what nature is for the theoretical part" (3,590/201). On the one hand, then, "there can only be a history of such beings as have an ideal before them" whereas, on the other hand, "man has a history only because what he will do is incapable of being calculated in advance according to any theory" (3,589/200). From the perspective of the individual consciousness, then, history would be the site of an absolute and potentially hubristic freedom or "spontaneity" (*Willkür*). And yet, precisely because the *System* (1800) consistently points to the irremediably temporal constitution of all anthropomorphic consciousness

as the very index of its theoretical limits, history per se can no longer be reduced to a merely empirical contingency of interpretation, though it would be equally fallacious to elevate it to a transcendental concept. For if, according to Schelling, all transcendental or "purely" theoretical reflection remains itself enclosed by a historical horizon, it can follow only that "theory and history are totally opposed" (3,589/200):

All that has ever *been* in history is also truly connected, or will be, with the individual consciousness of each, not immediately, maybe, but certainly by means of innumerable linkages, of such a kind that if one could point them out it would also become obvious that the whole of the past was necessary in order to put this consciousness together. (3,590/201)

In his later philosophy, Schelling attempts to specify what he understands by these linkages and how they could be rendered intelligible for a self-consciousness. If human consciousness was capable of a reflection whereby it could reassemble all these linkages, the point of convergence (i.e., the absolute identity) of free spontaneity (*Willkür*) and necessity (*Notwendigkeit*), of Idealism and Realism would have been attained.³⁹ Indeed, the drive toward such an identity proves to be the "primary characteristic of history, namely, that it should exhibit a union of freedom and necessity" (3,593/203).

And yet, Schelling's introduction of tragedy as the complementary aesthetic form of intuition for "such an intervention of a hidden necessity into human freedom (3,595/204) reveals the incompatibility of a transcendental consciousness of inherently anthropomorphic constitution with the revelation of the absolute as this identity. The ultimate consequence of Schelling's dialectics, therefore, lies in the transference of authenticity and truth from the subjectivity of an individual consciousness to the historicity of the "spirit." The supreme literary genre of tragedy thus culminates in the disclosure of tragic meaning as an event precisely linked to and, indeed, contingent upon the death of the subject-protagonist. The annihilation of the protagonist's individual consciousness occurs at the very moment when he or she recognizes the "linkages" of the past as the necessary result of his or her own act of will. For Schelling, then, we must think of our finite consciousness not as a playwright independent of his or her creation (the *text* of history), nor are we to reduce it to the level of a merely functional (yet entirely unself-conscious) agency, a protagonist indifferently reciting a history without, however, recognizing the latter as the very "ground" of his or her own being. Instead, situated between an absolute subject (the *archetypus intellectus*, God) that has traditionally been conceived as entirely unconstrained by historical time and process (a notion Schelling will later challenge) and a finite consciousness wholly enclosed and determined by historical necessity and hence incapable

of recognizing itself as a product of this history, Schelling's self-consciousness occupies the ambiguous zone of the "copoet" (*Mitdichter* 3,602/210) of its own becoming.

It is this zone—between autonomy and necessity, between certainty and dependency—in which Schelling, after 1801, seeks to expand a metaphysical conception of God and History; and any discussion of Schelling's philosophy after 1801 can succeed only if it understands and, in its specific construction, constantly acknowledges that Schelling's speculative and metaphysical claims are rooted in a highly refined and advanced analysis of the anthropological constitution of human consciousness. Schelling's metaphysical conception of identity unfolds the positive image of such an identity from the inherently negative imprint or tract of the irremediably interpretive (*Mitdichter*) and heteronomous subjectivity of human consciousness.⁶⁰ With its collapse of the first, theoretical epoch into a second, practical one the history of consciousness "provides a continuous demonstration of God's presence, a demonstration, however, which only the whole of history can render complete" (3,603/211). Because, as a "never wholly completed revelation of [the] absolute" (3,603/211), history remains ultimately undecidable for any finite subjectivity, this interpretive, anthropomorphic consciousness can only "find traces of this eternal and unalterable identity [*die Spur dieser ewigen und unveränderlichen Identität*] in the lawfulness which runs, like the texture [*Gewebe*] of an unknown hand, through the free play of choice in history" (3,601/209, trans. modified).

Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* articulates a tension between history and theory to which Schelling responds with a suspension of historical speculation for nearly ten years so as to rethink the logical and metaphysical implications of that tension itself. Between 1801 and 1809, notwithstanding the considerable range of his writings, he directs most of his attention to the ground of this perceived incompatibility between historical, cultural, and subjective processes and the consistency and totality that theoretical speculation always proclaims for the former. The overriding concern of these "middle years" of Schelling's career involves the thinking of identity as the negotiation—qua process—of differences, not opposites. The analytic, free, ideal, and conceptual unity and the synthetic, dependend, real, and intuitional unity must each be thought as but one hermeneutic perspective (as such constrained by what its historical epoch *could* think) on the absolute, self-same, and atemporal identity of Being.

III

Early on in his 1804 essay on "Philosophy and Religion" Schelling characterizes the monolithic nature of God or the Absolute as one of strict simultaneity,

even if from the viewpoint of an “ideal” mode of finite, human cognition such a totality can be understood only as a transition between form and essence and therefore is inevitably temporalized:

what is monolithic [*das Einfache*] or the essence is neither the *effective* nor the *real* ground of form, and we find no more of a transition between it and form than there could be between the idea of a circle and the form of equidistant, concentric points describing a line around one common center. In this region there is no succession, but everything has its Being simultaneously, as with one single stroke, notwithstanding that in an ideal sense one appears to derive from the other (6,30).

Hence, Schelling remarks somewhat later, “God is the *immediate* in-itself of history” and He “is strictly the totality of History—and the latter is merely a successive development of God” (6,56–7). Consequently, to (re)construct the Absolute under the aegis of a temporal form, even under a speculative model of reflection (such as Hegel’s “reflexive determinations” in the *Phenomenology*), is to leave inherently unexamined the overarching concept of identity that enables differences as such to coincide with themselves and thus ensures that any play of differences will yield a progression.⁶¹ In his 1804 lectures in Würzburg, which resulted in his *System of Philosophy in General* (published posthumously), Schelling sets out to rethink this concept of identity, taking as his point of departure the ostensibly universal, propositional grammar of epistemic predication (e.g., “The apple is green,” or “ $A = A'$ ”). As it turns out, all propositional statements appear to be marked by a formal paradox in that all cognition implies a form of relation whose condition of possibility remains unaccounted for in the actual proposition itself:

The *truth* of knowledge, for instance, is located in its *correspondence* with its object, or truth is explained as the correspondence of subjectivity and objectivity in knowledge. It is claimed that only a knowledge corresponding to its object constitutes genuine knowledge; a knowledge without any corresponding object is no knowledge but mere thinking. Such reflections occur even in ordinary consciousness. It is evident that, in explaining truth as a correspondence of subjectivity and objectivity in knowledge, subject and object are already assumed to differ from one another, for only different [entities] may correspond [whereas] nondifferent ones are inherently one. (6,138)

In Schelling’s view, all predicative knowledge is unsettled by an almost imperceptible fault line or rift between its formal condition of possibility (namely, that subject and object “are inherently one” or nondifferent) and its actual (material) purpose, according to which they must differ—for why else predicate

anything in the first place. Clearly, the logic of cognition mandates a certain dismantling of the subjectivity of the knowing subject. Schelling thus notes that “we now abandon forever that sphere of reflection which discriminates between the subject and the object, and our subsequent investigation can only be the development and exploration of the presupposition that the knower and what is known are one and the same: (6,140).

Difference, that is, can evolve only under the aegis of a unified, unchanging oneness, an essential identity of Being. Consequently, the “differends” of difference cannot be understood as parts or representations of Being (*Seyn*) but, on the contrary, exhibit the relative “Nonbeing” of all phenomenal and material being (*Seyendes*) or form. What is related with one another in the kind of relation that structures propositional knowledge can thus attain the truth of Being only if it is not reified as subject and object. And yet, far from presuming that the subject-object opposition could simply be discarded, Schelling suggests that the identity on which any predicative or unconscious relation between what are traditionally called *subject* and *object* is based must itself be *known* as *their* identity. In reconceiving subject and object as virtualities or “powers” or, as the 1804 *System* puts it, as dynamic “quantitative differences”—demarkating a certain interpretation of the inherently unrepresentable identity—Schelling does not deny them existence but, to the extent that they exist in reified and propositional form, denies them the power of “truth.” Truth thus inheres neither in an empirically conceived relation between entities (subject-object), nor can it be conflated with the unity that, in Kant’s *Critique*, is claimed as the ground for the propositional subject-predicate grammar of synthetic judgments. As the unrepresentable and, strictly speaking, still unthought condition of possibility for such a “transcendental unity,” identity thus no longer conforms to traditional philosophical (i.e., oppositional) models of “difference.” To be sure, though, Schelling in no way replaces the oppositional paradigm of difference with one of mere “indifference” (*Einerleiheit*); for to think identity as “indifference” would amount to a mere negation or suspension of an already reflected, once again oppositionally structured, difference between two heterogeneous entities, and therefore would be a derivative of the Kantian conception of “unity.”⁶² Instead, we find Schelling adopting what might be called a *variational*, rather than *relational*, paradigm as the one enabling us to think the economy of identity and difference. Indeed, as Schelling comments in his 1805 “Aphorisms for the Philosophy of Nature”: “Anything that originates in a relation, *insofar* as it is strictly grounded in a relation, is merely an *ens imaginarium*, an empty creation without an inner unity, a chimera (*simulacrum*) which both is and is not, depending how we look upon it” (7,164).

Yet in what way can we positively think such an isomorphous paradigm of identity/difference? And what possible significance and benefit could such a

thinking yield especially for today's highly diverse discourses of "Theory"? How are we to think (and represent) an identity whose *constitutive and dynamic unfolding of difference* evolves neither as a juxtaposing of heterogeneous entities (which would compromise its very authenticity or "truth" as absolute Being) nor as a merely contingent and unreflected process (i.e., as an "indifference"), but that instead constitutes the very "essence" and totality of knowledge, value, and truth? Clearly, Schelling has pushed "theory" to its very limits or, as some of his contemporaries and perhaps some of his readers today might argue, well beyond those limits into a domain of outright mystical speculation that, it appears, no longer answers to logic, let alone to more empirically construed standards of discursive accountability.

Before we can fairly address these concerns, as indeed we must, we may have to suspend our disbelief a little longer and listen in on Schelling's continuing modulation of his central issue in some of his later texts, specifically those presented here for the first time in translation. If it is true that Schelling invests his concept of "identity" with supreme epistemic significance, we now notice how—unlike the inadequate notion of mere "indifference"—this identity appears to resurrect, at least implicitly, a certain anthropomorphic quality that Schelling's earlier critique of subjectivity had rejected. Consider, for example the following passage: "the supreme knowledge necessarily implies that the self-sameness of the subject and the object becomes itself something known; or, since this self-sameness consists precisely in the identity of the knower and the know, it is that knowledge wherein the eternal self-sameness comes to recognize itself" (6,141). Identity, it appears, mandates a doubling of the traditional concept of relation. That is, instead of the object emerging as the "property" of the knowing subject, both are but variational manifestations of an identity and hence cannot be *qualitatively* different; or, put differently, their inherently homologous relation comes to know itself as such; that is, as identity. In a series of concise steps (§§ 1–32), Schelling's 1804 *System* begins to develop this concept of identity, insisting that identity—if thought as an ontotheological, absolute agency—*must appear and hence is committed to difference*, albeit only quantitative difference (because all quality, insofar as it bears a *legitimate* or "true" relation to the essence of Being is One). Furthermore, all difference that, in its relation to Being, Schelling calls *powers* (*Potenzen*) and *ideas* is to partake of a variational continuum of appearances that may not exhibit any discontinuities (*natura non saltat*).

If Schelling's 1804 lectures succeed in elaborating, with generally admirable clarity, the metaphysical dimension of relations in general, they do not yet fully address the actual purpose of this differential continuum whose sole task appears to consist in affirming the absolute. What purpose, we might ask, does the drama of finite, individual consciousness and cognition serve, if it is understood that it cannot ground itself and, consequently, cannot declare itself, as the knowing subject, to be that purpose? Or, as Schelling puts it,

that ultimate question posed by the vertiginous intellect hovering at the abyss of infinity: "Why [is] something rather than nothing?", this question will be swept aside forever by the necessity of Being, that is, by the absolute affirmation of Being in knowledge. The absolute *position* of the idea of God is indeed nothing but the absolute negation of nothingness, and the same certainty of reason that ensures the negation of nothingness and thus the nullity of nothingness also affirms the totality [das All] and the eternity of God (6,155).

This eternal "subjectivity" is also referred to, in the preceding passage, as *Reason* or *God*, and it is manifestly incompatible with the traditional, Kantian and Fichtean concept of reason and subjectivity. "By reason," Schelling notes in his 1804 *System*, "I do not merely understand its manifestation and its gradual progress toward self-knowledge in humanity, but Reason insofar as it is the universal, true essence, [and] the substance of all things which inhabits the entire universe" (6,208).⁶³

Schelling's later writings, especially his *Treatise of Human Freedom* and his *Stuttgart Seminars*, pursue what, in the preceding passage, is already hinted at. Any concept of the absolute, be it called *God*, the *Absolute*, or *Reason*, remains a vacuous formalism unless it is invested with an epistemic desire, a desire for self-knowledge, and thus, ultimately, is understood as an inherently differentiated subjectivity. Hence its coherence is neither vested in an unreflected unity nor in an eventual synthesis but, on the contrary, is to be thought as an identity of inherently differential constitution, namely, as Being (*Seyn*) and as existence (*Existenz*). To characterize identity as capable of meaning is to delineate its *forms of appearance*, which is tantamount to conceiving of it as a purposeful play of quantitative or variational difference. Especially in his *Stuttgart Seminars* (1810), whose moderately introductory tone sought to accommodate a largely lay audience, Schelling comes to develop more emphatically his notion of the inherent dependency of a metaphysical God on a controlled economy of difference or otherness. As he comments, "this transition from identity to difference has often been understood as a *cancellation of identity*; yet that is not at all the case. . . . Much rather it is a doubling [*Doubling*] of the essence, and thus an intensification of the unity, something that is once again aptly illustrated by means of an analogy with ourselves" (7,424–5).

As Schelling then goes on to note, "this act of restriction or of a descent by God is spontaneous [*freiwillig*]" because "only God Himself can break with the absolute identity of His essence and thereby can create the space for a revelation" (7,429). Even more emphatically than in his 1809 *Treatise of Human Freedom*, Schelling now relies on a paradigm of subjectivity as all but indispensable for understanding God or the absolute as an inherently doubled identity; namely, as "being" (*Seyn*) and "existence" (*Existenz*).

To be sure, subjectivity here no longer functions as an ontological characterization but as a heuristic conception (perhaps the only feasible strategy of representation) of God as Identity. As Schelling puts it, "the entire process of the creation of the world—which still lives on in the life process of nature and history—is in effect nothing but the process of the complete coming-to-consciousness, of the complete personalization of God" (7,433). Such remarks reiterate Schelling's suggestions, in his 1809 *Treatise of Human Freedom*, that God "allowed the basis to operate independently, because he felt the will of the ground to be the will towards his revelation and recognized, in accordance with his providence, that a ground independent of him (as spirit) would have to be the ground of his existence" (7,378/55).⁶⁴

God, then, is ultimately to be thought as a will, even as a "desire or passion [*Begierde oder Lust*]" (7,395/75) for Being as both "ground" and "existence." The differential, indeed relatively deficient (and thus relatively autonomous) finite world of nature and humanity, therefore appears as the material condition of a desire for self-presence:

Because there is in God an independent ground of reality, and hence two equally eternal beginnings of self-revelation, therefore God with respect to his freedom, must also be viewed in relation to both. The first beginning of creation is the longing of the One to give birth to itself, or the will of the ground. The second is the will of love through which the Word is pronounced in nature and through which God first makes himself personal. (7,395/74)

"All Existence," Schelling argues, "must be conditioned in order that it may be actual, that is, personal existence. God's existence, too, could not be personal if it were not conditioned, except that he has the conditioning factor *within* himself and not outside himself" (7,399/79).

What might seem an unabashed, even reckless proclivity toward mysticism, I would argue, may yet offer us insights such as will not only deflect such charges (which Schelling does quite explicitly when insisting on the hubris of thinking rationality as a kind of foundation [see *Stuttgart Seminars*; 7,469ff.]) but may even challenge contemporary critical discourses to reevaluate their often unexamined paradigms of "identity." Far beyond the often arcane and perilously specialized debates regarding the question of Pantheism, Materialism, or the notion of a "positive philosophy" in Schelling's later work, his central quest for a rigorous *thinking* of identity remains as urgent today as it proved to Schelling.⁶⁵ First and foremost, Schelling's writings after 1801 decisively critique the common practice of conflating identity with unity and, by extension, of assigning identity as an attribute and property to the various constructionist or essentialist theories of the subject that have descended upon contemporary discourse since the mid-nineteenth century. Rather than

being the attribute of a reified subjectivity (alternatively thought as absolute, collective, or finite-individual), identity can *appear only* as a dynamic and interpretive continuum of *variational difference*. Being posited as the material condition of possibility for any manifest identity—both in the realm of finite cognition and its construction of an absolute homology of God and History—*difference* can neither be grounded in, nor tethered to, an absolute rationality (e.g., a “natural law”) but, on the contrary, is a temporal “power” or “stage” in an ongoing process of self-realization (or self-revelation) fueled by an inherently *arational* desire. Consequently, Schelling argues late in his *Treatise of Human Freedom*, “there must be an essence [Wesen], *before* all ground and before all existence, that is, before any duality at all; how can we designate it except as ‘primal ground’ [Urgrund] or, rather, as the ‘groundless’ [Ungrund]?” (7,406/87).⁶⁶

IV

Part of the appeal and “modernity” of Schelling’s conception of identity, I would argue, lies in his recognition that any paradigm of subjectivity involves a reinscription of the very oppositions it is meant to control. This dilemma, which constitutes a much more serious challenge to theory than a merely formal paradox, can be perceived not only in the Kantian and Fichtean oppositions of intuition-concept or feeling-concept and in Schelling’s own, earlier dialectic of a self gradually assembled by the temporal movement of unconscious production and reflective remembering. Quite beyond the Idealist discursive tradition of which, according to Walter Schulz, Schelling is to be regarded as the consummate representative, Schelling’s later texts strongly suggest that any paradigm of “identity”—irrespective of whether we situate it in the traditional discursive space of formal epistemology or even in contemporary, theoretical discourses on the politics of gendered, sexual, racial, and ethnic identity—has inscribed within it the impossibility of identity as personal, individual, or even collective “property.” In fact, any subjective attempt to prepossess the concept of identity in a proprietary sense, even if it were to be promoted on behalf of a collective body, constitutes, according to Schelling, a form of *hubris*; it disrupts the metaphysical import—which is fundamentally one of ethics—of the very figure of identity. Anticipating similar ideas in the work of Jacques Lacan, Heidegger thus can comment that the “other” toward which the individual subjectivity is driven always implies the “absolute disruption of existence.”⁶⁷ Indeed, Schelling’s gradual development of his philosophy of identity out of the debris of the Kantian and Fichtean theories of the subject is driven by the recognition that the very opposition between a constructivist (dialectical) and an essentialist (intuitional) paradigm of the subject is not to be resolved, even though as a *constantly self-*

transforming opposition, it would seem to be the simultaneously indispensable and deficient medium for the possible revelation of the absolute.

For to seek to arbitrate between an essentialist (and, contiguous with that trope, intuitional, affective, private, expressivist) and constructivist (as well as discursive, ideological, public) identity of the subject in theories of gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality is to return to a Kantian, Fichtean, even Cartesian model of the subject without adequately addressing the impasses generated by that tradition. What renders Schelling's speculations on the concept of identity so potentially significant is precisely his insistence on its irreducibly metaphysical-ethical dimension commonly unrecognized by essentialist and constructionist representations of identity, respectively. For even the very totality of an absolute subject of metaphysics (God, Reason) cannot be thought *in conjunction with the phenomenal, finite world* unless its identity, too, is understood as a structured and necessary process of differential relations. That is, "the longing of the One to give birth to itself" evinces the management of difference between His "ground" and "existence" to be neither a systematic, theoretical nor a contingent, historical event but a reflex of his intrinsic dependency on "an essence before all ground" (7,406/87). In contemporary terms, one might speak of this mystical concept as a desire for the construction of an essence.⁶⁸ Such a desire, it ought to be stressed, can no longer be ontologically classified as "natural" or essential, or as ideological and constructed, because it is the ineffable productivity of such a "desire or passion" that first opens the space for theoretical attempts—alternatively formalist or dialectical—at remembering the subject as an essence or construct, respectively.

Beyond the fundamental fact that, for Schelling, "the absolute identity is not a mere identity but the identity of unity and oppositionality" (7,445), it also holds true that the opposition between essentialism and constructionism arguably underwrites the entire project of Schelling's philosophy of identity, because nature (in its various powers) is but a *Konstruktion* whose material (or real) dependency on "essence" (*Wesen*) is matched by God's cognitive (or ideal) dependency on a relatively independent, material existence. In other words, identity, for Schelling, ultimately designates a controlled and continuous play of differential relations, that is, a bidirectional dependency, between "ground" and "existence" or between the Oneness of a hypostatized, ideal "essence" and the multiplicity of the former's heterogeneous, material "construction." Identity thus can neither be thought as a natural nor as a constructed *attribute* and, considering its ultimate metaphysical nonplace—which, while shading off into mysticism, cannot, therefore, simply be rejected as a *particular position* by theoretical discourse—it not only cannot "ground" some version of epistemic authority but, more seriously, exposes the inherently arational nature of the philosophical operation of "grounding" itself.

In Schelling's texts of 1809 and 1810, identity instead uncovers the profoundly mystical desire for a controlled, subject-producing relation between the essential (*Wesen*) and the constructed (*Seyendes*), a distinction that resonates in contemporary distinctions between the essential and the constructed dimension of the subject (itself, rather carelessly, understood as a "theoretical" distinction). Identity, that is, constitutes not the ground of subjectivity but, in a truly vertiginous reversal, exposes the "anthropomorphic" quality of the subject (both in man and God) as rooted in an irremediably "groundless" (*Ungrund*) "desire" or "lust" for the operation of grounding itself. Refusing to be prepossessed by Reason, whose historicity it continually exposes, Schelling's conception of identity would rather seem to be at once the source and the telos of a desire (such as it manifests itself in the ongoing theoretical quest for a "grounding" of the subject; i.e., as essence, construct, or syncretistic amalgamation of both). Identity or, alternatively, its phenomenal disclosure as self-focused desire thus remains irrecoverably anterior to any paradigm of rationality, such as instantiates a discursive or interpretive community, even as it attempts to demarcate the authority of representation, knowledge, ethical accountability, and so on. It is, in other words, a *trope* in the most rigorous sense.

It is worthwhile reiterating the "irreducibly" tropological nature of "identity"—"irreducibly," once again, because this trope resists any remission into a literal frame of reference. That is, once conceived of as the inherently arational *Ungrund* of the absolute subject (Reason or God), identity defies conceptualization and, in consequence of that impossibility, cannot be consigned to the status of a mere metaphor in the historical narrative of philosophies of the subject. On the contrary, as a master trope invoked as the operational center by both philosophical and political theories of the subject and by their ideological critiques, identity simultaneously presupposes and hides from sight the economies of thinking about difference (e.g., of race, sex, gender, culture, money) that underwrite and enable any hermeneutics of the subject. Put differently, we may expect critical theories as well as ideological critiques of identity to confront their ethical and, by extension, metaphysical debt at precisely that moment *when they decide* (in a gesture that often goes unnoticed and, generally speaking, proves embarrassingly contingent) *on a certain paradigm of controlled difference as such*.

Hence to assert that identity is particular, constructed in accordance with often repressed or suppressed mechanisms of economic, gendered, ethnic, and sexual causes—though it may sound more "contemporary"—does little to circumvent the pitfalls of the very discourse on subjectivity that Schelling's philosophy of identity both exposes and attempts to bridge. The concept of identity, I propose, demarcates the site of an ongoing, quite possibly inescapable, crisis within the practice of theory. For inscribed within it is a general form of "desire" that both ensures and hides from sight the as it were

mystical dimension of identity.⁶⁹ Perhaps identity can be best understood as that which opens the “ground” (*Grund*) for a critique of the opposed paradigms of the subject (ranging from Kant’s synthetic reconciliation of his intuition-concept dichotomy to current attempts at balancing the essentialism-constructivism dyad in gender theory) while simultaneously exposing the contingency (*Ungrund*) of such a grounding, epistemological desire for self-presence, even where it concerns the absolute subject (Schelling’s God). The “in-mixing” of a structure of relative “Nonbeing” or otherness—which also appears to set Schelling and Lacan into striking, if unexpected, proximity—thus appears the condition for any subject whatsoever. Yet because the moment of pronouncing the identity of the subject means primarily a certain engagement of otherness within a *specifically* controlled and restricted economy of difference, as Schelling well knew, identity involves, *prima facie*, not the birth of the subject but that of a certain ethical practice. Schelling’s gradual dissociation of the notion of identity from that of the subject thus suggests that, when understood as a desire for “ground” rather than as that ground itself, “identity” tends to demarcate a certain paradigm of theoretical practice that, in turn, is composed of a paradigmatic (and, indeed, a pragmatic) management of difference and relations. Theories of subjective identity—regardless of their cognitive intention and discursive inflection—thus constitute a fundamentally unself-conscious ethical practice. It is quite possibly the recognition of this ethical undercurrent within all theoretical practice that leads Schelling, in his *Stuttgart Seminars*, to venture a comment as paradoxical as it appears profound: “The soul is something impersonal,” he notes, “for it is through the soul that man establishes a rapport with God” (7,469).

NOTES

1. See, for example, Nicolai Hartman, *Die Philosophie des Deutschen Idealismus*, Vol. I, p. 112. For arguably the most famous instance of restricting Schelling to the pre-Hegel years, which turn out to be Schelling’s publishing years, until 1809, see Richard Kroner, *Von Kant bis Hegel* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1961 [2 ed.]).

2. Martin Heidegger, *Schelling’s Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, p. 3.

3. For a brief and concise account of popular and enduring prejudices and reductive views regarding Schelling, see Victor C. Hayes, “Schelling: Persistent Legends, Improving Image.”

4. See, for example, Horst Fuhrmans’s remarks on Schelling’s philosophical continuity in *Schellings Philosophie der Weltalter*, p. 6. For Fuhrmans,

Schelling's philosophical career involves, at most, only two distinct phases, that of his *Philosophy of Identity* and that of his Christian or "Positive Philosophy." Fuhrmans is right, I think, in conceiving of an overarching, consistent agenda for the *Philosophy of Nature*, the *Transcendental Idealism*, and the *System of Identity* (1801–1806).

5. For recent arguments and counterarguments regarding the (im)possibility of a postindividualistic, postsubjectivist model of "theory," see *Who Comes After the Subject*, ed. Jean Luc Nancy, Educarado Cadava, and Peter Connor (New York: Routledge, 1991), Paul Smith, *Discerning the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); and Manfred Frank's *What Is Neo-Structuralism?* trans. and ed. Sabine Wilke (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

6. Regarding the function of "identity" in recent, critical theories on issues of race, gender, sexuality, and culture, see Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking* (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988); Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990). For a brief and selective survey of the competing paradigms of the subject in current critical discourses on questions of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and race, see again Smith, *Discerning the Subject*.

7. The source of most of this significant and, ultimately, fruitful controversy is, of course, John L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962). For various and often competing exegeses of Austin's work and, specifically, the apparent condition of "explicitness" for genuine performatives, which Derrida interprets as a "citationality" or self-referentiality that causes speech acts to derive the semantic identity of their utterances always from elsewhere, a potentially illimitable "context," see Jacques Derrida's "Signature, Event, Context" in *Margins of Philosophy* trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); and his *Limited Inc.*, ed. Samuel Weber (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1988), which reprints that essay and, responding to John Searle's critique of his arguments ("Reiterating the Differences," in *Glyph 2* (1977): 198–208), the title essay itself. See also John Searle, *Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); Charles Altieri, *Act and Quality* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1981); Stanley Fish, "How to Do Things with Austin and Searle," in *Is There a Text in This Class?* (Cambridge, Mass.: University Harvard Press, 1980), as well as Fish's "With the Compliments of the Author: Reflections on Austin and Derrida" in *Doing What Comes Naturally: Change, Rhetoric, and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1989), pp. 37–67. A generally lucid

recapitulation of this debate has been offered by Sandra Petrey in *Speech Acts and Literary Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

8. In speaking of a "hypnotic" power of theory, I by no means wish to devalue theory as such. On the contrary, as with empirical hypnosis, the object of our concentration (i.e., theory) is not chosen but, indeed, inevitable; yet, in all fairness, we must recognize (at least post factum) that this "inevitability" no longer reflects the rational and, ultimately ontological, concept of "necessity." Rather, to extend the analogy with the paramedical procedure of hypnosis, the practice of theory hides from the subject thus mesmerized the ultimate "use value" of theoretical reflection. To stretch the analogy yet further, the power that emanates from theory is at once intrinsically unknowable and arbitrary, just as hypnotic authority is not grounded in the individual personality of the hypnotist but proves an effect of a felicitous performance; consequently, as Schelling's philosophy time and again suggests, proper theoretical reflection precludes any attempt at stabilizing its meanings on the grounds of subjective authority, because theory, according to the term's Greek roots (*theoreia* = contemplation), implies the abandonment of subjectivity. Thus it follows that the various "challenges" against theory are, as it were by definition, coming from "outside" of theory, in that they generally demand a genealogical narrative of self-legitimation of "theoretical behavior." Consistent with the hypnotic attainment of lucidity, theory is constitutionally incapable of disclosing, let alone "grounding" itself in, some authoritative origin. Schelling's philosophy of identity may arguably have driven this hypothesis further than most of the prior or contemporaneous instances of mainstream philosophy.

9. Because little of the preceding appears to indicate a clear departure from Hegel's thought, prior and up to 1807, and because, in their collaboration on the *Kritisches Journal* between 1801 and 1803, Hegel and Schelling actively collaborated on rethinking the crisis of the subject of critical philosophy as the seed for speculative thought, we ought to remark, albeit with rather schematic brevity, some of those differences between Schelling and Hegel that tend to fall outside of the genealogical narratives that have plotted the history of German Idealism primarily as a transition from one to the other.

Generally speaking, Hegel reframes the Aristotelian question concerning Being (*ti to on*) by arguing for a progressive sublation of Being (*Seyn*) into the subjectivity (*Bewusstsein*) of the spirit which, in turn, has transcended the anthropomorphic forms of consciousness precisely insofar as it has attained the truth of Being through the "concept of spirit" (*Begriff des Geistes*). Contrastingly, Schelling's philosophy after 1801 progressively formulates a theory of Being as an infinite index of an absolute identity that constitutes the condition of possibility for any philosophical reflection. In apparent contrast to Hegel, Schelling continues to emphasize the *materiality* of Being as

irreducibly anterior to all conceptual speculation: "Surely, Being holds priority over knowledge; for the latter is but the actuality [*Daseyn*] in relation to Being and, consequently . . . subordinate to a Being which is categorically independent, and thus prior to the knowledge by which it is presupposed: (7,68).

To be sure, the materiality of the created world (*natura naturata*) is not, therefore, its own "truth," yet neither can it be consigned to a mere "ground" for the unfolding of a truth that, eventually, would be said to exist autonomously. A condition can never be completely sublated into that which it has conditioned. Not only can the human, finite subject not transcend it, but the created material world serves as the "ground" through which the eternally self-same identity of God or the Absolute actuates itself. Where Hegel stresses the logical dimension of reflexivity in the concept, Schelling emphasizes the *material* grounds as a condition that can always be *negated* (i.e., spiritualized), yet that can never be *voided* in an ontological sense by any spirit (including the spirituality attributed to God).

A corollary of this philosophical difference involves Hegel's apparent emphasis on the *totality* of the absolute concept as the endpoint of the bifurcated, speculative movement of a natural and a philosophic consciousness. Whereas this movement eventually results in the erasure (*tilgen*) of time itself, Schelling insists on the "infinity of all self-cognition of identity" (4,141), and on the "duplicity" that inheres in identity at all times (Being-being, ground-existence).

Regarding Schelling's relation to Hegel, see especially the essays by Bernard Reardon, Klaus Düsing, Werner Hartkopf, and Manfred Frank (1975). For a lucid discussion of the fundamental movement of Schelling's thinking after 1800, see Horst Fuhrmans, *Schellings Philosophie der Weltalter*, 34 and 38.

10. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 54. The translation is my own.

11. Schleiermacher, the only thinker in German Idealism to point to a fundamental asymmetry between Subject and History as the two dominant tropes of speculative philosophy. See my "Immediacy and the Text: Friedrich Schleiermacher's Theory of Style and Interpretation." *JHI* 51 (1990): 51-73). An analogous insight, I would like to propose, accounts for a theoretical "modernity" of Schelling that still awaits full recognition. In addition to Schleiermacher's contemporaneous writings, another strikingly cognate philosophical orientation appears to prevail in the early work of Walter Benjamin. See my "Thinking Beyond Totality: *Kritik*, *Übersetzung*, and the Language of Interpretation in the Early Walter Benjamin.: *MLN* 103, no. 5 (1988): 1072-1097.

12. *Introduction to Logic*, p. 15. In German, *Logik, Werkausgabe*, IX, 25.

13. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 105/135. For citations of editions of Kant's, Fichte's, and Schelling's complete works, see the editorial apparatus above.

14. For a general exposition of Kant's theory of subjectivity as "transcendental apperception," see Ernst Cassirer, *Kant's Life and Thought*, trans. James Haden (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 193 ff.

15. "If I want to observe the mere 'I' in the change of all representations, I have no other correlatum to use in my comparisons except again myself, with the universal conditions of my consciousness. Consequently, I can give none but tautological answers to all questions, in that I substitute my concept and its unity for the properties which belong to myself as object, and so take for granted that which the questioner has desired to know." *Critique of Pure Reason* (A 366/344). Recently, Stanley Rosen has offered a very lucid reading of Kant's theoretical strategy in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, focusing on the related centrality of the concept of "spontaneity" in that text. *Hermeneutics and Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 19–49.

16. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Marginalia*, vol. III, ed. H. J. Jackson and George Whalley (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 242–243).

17. My subsequent analysis of Kant's chapter on the transcendental schematism draws on Martin Heidegger's analysis of Kant's transcendental deduction of the categories. For a balanced, critical review of Heidegger's argument, see Ernst Cassirer, "Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics: Remarks on Martin Heidegger's Interpretation of Kant," in *Kant: Disputed Questions*, ed. Moltke Gram (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967).

18. As Heidegger comments, "time is not only the necessarily pure image of the schemata of the pure concepts of understanding but also their only possibility of [presenting] a pure aspect [Anblick]. This unique possibility of presenting an aspect reveals itself to be nothing other than time and the temporal" *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, p. 109. For a detailed discussion of the differences between schema and image, see Ernst Robert Curtius on "Das Schematismuskapitel in Kants 'Kritik der Reinen Vernunft'." *Kant-Studien* 19 (1914): 338–366.

19. To refer to the schema as a form of intuition constitutes, of course, a certain disruption of Kant's own understanding of that term. What changes, to be sure, is that the schema is in principle located on the axis of production, not reception, and that it is not referential or empirical. Yet Kant's deployment of the schema, which in many ways is rethought by Kant himself in the chapter on the "aesthetic ideas" in the *Critique of Judgment*, is bound up with a notion of "creative" or, as Fichte will call it, "intellectual intuition." That

becomes apparent in Kant's long note (B 422–23) to the "Paralogism" chapter.

20. See Schelling, *System des Transzendentalen Idealismus* (III, 508–23) and Herder, *Metakritik zur 'Kritik der Reinen Vernunft'*, *Werke*, ed. B. Suphan (Berlin: n.p., 1881), vol. XXI, p. 125.

21. For a detailed discussion of the "productive imagination," see Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, pp. 145–146 and, on the schematism in general, pp. 193–201. Kant's principal definition of the "imagination" in the *Critique of Pure Reason* can be found on B 151/165.

22. Indeed, Kant is forced to acknowledge that the relation between the transcendental imagination and apperception is contingent, that the "schematism . . . is an art concealed in the depth of the human soul, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover, and to have open to our gaze" (A 141/183). For a very lucid description of the hypothetical rhetoric of Kant's *Critique*, see Rosen *Hermeneutics and Politics*, pp. 26–32.

23. For a discussion of this passage in Kant, see Manfred Frank, *Eine Einführung in Schellings Philosophie*, pp. 38–47. As Frank points out, Schelling seems to be the only one of the Idealists to have alluded to this passage in Kant; namely, in his *Treatise Explicatory of the Idealism in the Science of Knowledge*, translated later (1,420–1 n.). Schelling appears to be the first to notice that self-consciousness, in Kant, remains an ontologically unexamined presupposition, and that only the identification of self-consciousness and apperception allows Kant to postulate the necessary continuity among the three syntheses of apprehension, reproduction, and recognition.

24. Fichte, *Die Bestimmung des Menschen*, *Gesamtausgabe* vol I, p. 6: 200, 202. *The Vocation of Man*, pp. 12, 14.

25. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*; the quotation is from the "Preface," p. 79.

26. See especially Ernst Cassirer, *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der Neueren Zeit*, vol. III, pp. 1–125; and George di Giovanni's Introduction, "The Facts of Consciousness" to the first part of his and J. S. Harris's *Between Kant and Hegel*, a book that provides translations of some of the pivotal texts in this period, pp. 1–50.

27. Friedrich Hölderlin, letter to Neuffer (October 10, 1794), *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. VI, p. 1: 137.

28. Having passed through Tübingen once before, in June 1793, Fichte returned there, on his way to Jena where he was to begin lecturing as a

recently appointed professor of philosophy, in May 1794. Schelling sent Fichte a copy of his first published philosophical essay, "On the Possibility of a Form of All Philosophy," published in translation as the first of four essays in *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge*. See *Briefe und Dokumente*, vol. I, pp. 26–31; and Schelling's accompanying letter to Fichte, *ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 51–52.

29. Regarding the notion of an "intellectual intuition" in Kant, Fichte, and Schelling see note 34 to the 1797 *Treatise Explicatory of the Idealism in the Science of Knowledge*, and note 28 to the 1804 *System of Philosophy in General*, later.

30. On Fichte's grounding of the proposition $A = A$ through a primordial, "positing" self, see Cassirer, *Das Erkenntnisproblem*, vol. III, pp. 141 f.

31. Schelling's analysis of the proposition of identity (" $A = A$ ") in his *System* of 1804 (6,145 ff.), translated below, contrasts in significant ways with Fichte's earlier development of his "Principles" for the *Science of Knowledge*. See also note 10 to the text of the 1804 *System*.

32. Having quoted Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (B 132), Fichte comments: "Here the nature of pure self-consciousness is clearly described. In all consciousness it is the same; hence undeterminable by any contingent feature of consciousness; the self therein is determined solely by itself, and is absolutely determined" "Second Introduction to the *Science of Knowledge*," (I,4: 229/SK 49). Fichte subsequently discriminates between Kant's and his own position, noting that "according to Kant, all consciousness is merely conditioned (*bedingt*) by self-consciousness, that is, its content can be founded upon something outside self-consciousness. . . . According to the *Science of Knowledge*, all consciousness is determined (*bestimmt*) by self-consciousness, that is, everything that occurs in consciousness is founded, given and introduced by the conditions of self-consciousness" (I,4: 229/SK 50). See also Fichte's "Grundriss des Eigenthümlichen der Wissenschaftslehre," vol. I, p. 3:144 ff.

33. "Fichte's Original Insight," in *Contemporary German Philosophy* 1 (1982): 26. Elsewhere Fichte explicitly aligns the producer-product paradigm for the Self with the one of intuition-concept (reflection); see, "Grundriss des Eigenthümlichen," vol. I, p. 3:159.

34. Henrich, "Fichte's Original Insight," p. 20. On the general problematic of grounding the phenomenon of self-consciousness in a theory of reflection, see also Dieter Henrich's "Selbstbewusstsein: Kritische Einleitung in eine Theorie," in *Hermeneutik und Dialektik*, ed. R. Bubner, K. Cramer, and R. Wiehl (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1970); and Ulrich Potthast, *Über einige Fragen der Selbstbeziehung* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1971). On the significance of Idealist conceptions of reflection for contemporary theory see Rodolphe

Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 13–57.

35. Henrich, “Fichte’s Original Insight,” p. 26.

36. Regarding Fichte’s extension of his “critical Idealism” into a metaphysics that interprets self-consciousness as “a manifestation of God, . . . emerging from an inconceivable ground which the Self does not control,” see also Henrich, *ibid.*, p. 42.

37. Regarding this crucial passage, Dieter Henrich notes that “the ‘as’ here means the same as the Greek *e*, the particle of representation <as in Aristotle’s phrase *to on e on* (being qua being).> All intentional meaning means something in a definite way; every instance of explicit knowledge knows something about a specific item and therefore recognizes it ‘as’ this. . . . However, the expanded formula leads to a new problem. The particle of representation ‘as’ designates a three-term relation: Something (1) represents something (2) as something (3). We shall have to ask what roles these three factors are meant to play in the Self that posits itself”. “Fichte’s Original Insight,” p. 28. Already Schelling, in his 1806 critique of Fichte, points to the problematic nature of this representational doubling (7,76–77). For similar formulations of the self positing itself as self-positing, see *WL* 347, 358, 361 / *SK* 182, 192, 195.

38. “Fichte’s Original Insight,” pp. 29 f. Henrich goes on to note that “we form an idea of an active ground existing prior to the active Self, a ground that explains the equiprimordial unity of the factors in the Self, but is not itself present to the self. The term ‘Self’ refers not to this ground, but only to its result,” p. 30.

39. “The Self’s immediate knowledge first makes possible the ‘as’ of the concept. For by virtue of this immediate self-knowledge, intuition and concept stand immediately in relation to one another within the Self” *ibid.*, p. 37. Ernst Cassirer observes that for Fichte, “the schema does not appear as the imitation [*Abbild*] of existing empirical objects, but as the example [*Vorbild*] a priori for possible empirical syntheses which it dominates and determines as a necessary precept” *Das Erkenntnisproblem*, vol. III, p. 158. Significantly enough, on the occasion of postulating that “cause and effect ought, indeed, to be thought of as one and the same” Fichte hints at a renewal of Kant’s “schematism” (*WL* 294–95/*SK* 131).

40. Fichte’s entire theory of *Gefühl* remains profoundly indebted to Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*. Kant’s text itself involves the significant shift from a reception of aesthetic form, which facilitates what he calls *cognition in general*, to a production of aesthetic ideas. Such ideas, for Kant, are characterized by a certain semiological excess: “In a word, the

aesthetical idea is a representation of the imagination associated with a given concept, which is bound up with such a multiplicity of partial representations in its free employment that for it no expression marking a definite concept can be found" (B 197/160). See also Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe* vol. I, p. 6:344 ff.

41. The fragments edited under the title "On the Duties of the Scholar (1794–95) are cited from volume II, p. 3 of the *Gesamtausgabe*; all translations from this text are mine.

42. Fichte speaks of the "wonderful power of productive imagination within ourselves . . . without which nothing at all in the human mind is capable of explanation" (SK 188/WL 353). Like Kant, Fichte asserts that this faculty alone—albeit in logical asymmetry to the rationality of self-consciousness it is said to effect—decides on the possibility of self-consciousness. The productive imagination alone "makes possible life and consciousness, especially, as a progressive sequence in time" (WL 350/SK 185). Thus "the act of the imagination forms the basis for the possibility of our consciousness, our life, our existence *for ourselves*, that is, our existence as selves" (WL 369/SK 202).

43. The concept of "crisis" in German Idealism is explored incisively in Schelling's "Treatise of Human Freedom," where the concept achieves its greatest significance. See David Farrell Krell, "The Crisis of Reason in the Nineteenth Century: Schelling's Treatise on Human Freedom."

44. Fichte does not, however, chose to pursue this inquiry, which would undoubtedly have mandated a revision of his conservative philosophy of language according to which language remains secondary and inessential for philosophical reflection. See his "Von der Sprachfähigkeit und dem Ursprung der Sprache" (I,3:93–127). On Fichte's overall conventional philosophy of language, see Kurt Müller-Vollmer, "Fichte und die Romantische Sprachtheorie," in *Der Transzendente Gedanke*, ed. Klaus Hammacher (Hamburg: Meiner, 1981).

45. Hölderlin, letter to Hegel, #94, January 26, 1795. *Friedrich Hölderlin: Essays and Letters on Theory*, p. 125.

46. Regarding Hölderlin's influence on Schelling, see Frank, *Eine Einführung in Schellings Philosophie*, pp. 61–70; and by the same author, *Der Unendliche Mangel an Sein*, pp. 19–31. Regarding Schelling's early attempts at supplanting Fichte's critical idealism, Hölderlin appears to have encouraged Schelling, who was five years younger. See the reports on their conversations in 1795 in Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. VII, p. 2:47 f.

47. Both "Of the Self as Principle of Philosophy" and the "Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism" are included in Fritz Marti's transla-

tion of four early essays by Schelling, published as *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge*. As usual, parenthetical citations refer first to the German text and, after a /, to the English translation.

48. Schelling's critique of Fichte in his earlier writings has been discussed by Reinhard Lauth, in several publications, as well as by Manfred Frank, *Eine Einführung in Schellings Philosophie*, Ingtraud Görland, *Die Entwicklung der Frühphilosophie Schellings in der Auseinandersetzung mit Fichte* (esp. pp. 19–36); and Harald Holz. See the Bibliography.

49. See Schelling's *Stuttgart Seminars* (1810), where Schelling claims that all rational, cognitive, and reflective activity of the finite human subject essentially displaces its entropic and "irrational ground" (7,469 f.); "madness" thus proves an epiphenomenon of the reflective understanding, and rather than "originating" in some unaccountable manner, it merely "breaks through." See also *On the Essence of Human Freedom* (7,382/59 f.).

50. On the conception of nature and the unconscious in Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*, see George Di Giovanni, "Kant's Metaphysics of Nature and Schelling's Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature," in di Giovanni and Harris, *Between Kant and Hegel*; and George Seidel, *Activity and Ground*, pp. 100–107.

51. We should remember, however, that Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, too, ends with the word *infinitude*, slightly misquoted from Schiller. In Schelling's critical analysis of the relation between "Being" (*Seyn*) and "concept" *Begriff* in Hegel, see Frank's brilliant discussion, *Der Unendliche Mangel an Sein*, pp. 32 ff.

52. On this distinction, which clearly anticipates Hegel's concept of an "absolute" reflection, see Frank, *Eine Einführung*, pp. 94 f.; and Cassirer, *Das Erkenntnisproblem*, vol. III, pp. 225 ff.

53. Schelling elaborates this dialectical schema as late as 1827 in his *Vorlesungen zur Geschichte der Neuren Philosophie* (10,93).

54. We must sharply differentiate between Schelling's notion of "identity" and the Fichtean conception of "unity as indifference"; in the latter, the anthropomorphic consciousness as producer and (qua self-consciousness) as product always determines this identity *as its own*, reappropriates the self as the signifier and the signified of such unity. Identity thus involves a reconciliation of the opposition of intuition-concept, producer-product, etc. By contrast, Schelling's conception of identity involves not the "sphere" of self-determination of an anthropomorphic self-consciousness but of God or Being as both its own autonomous "ground" and as its own heteronomous existence.

55. Görland, *Die Entwicklung der Frühphilosophie*, p. 174.

56. The exposition of this duplicity recurs whenever Schelling elaborates his philosophy of identity. Thus he speaks of a quantitative difference in all identity (4,126 n.), for identity never involves a merely formal notion of self-sameness. "In the proposition $A = A$ the same is posited as the same for itself [dasselbe wird sich selbst gleichgesetzt]." Hence we have what Schelling calls the *identity of identity*; that is, an identity that knows of itself as such (6,165). See also 4,121; 4,389 f.; 7,342 ff.; 7,426 ff.; 10,102 ff.

57. See also *The Ages of the World* (1813), where Schelling argues with unmistakable Platonic overtones how "this archetype of things slumbers in the soul like an obscured and forgotten, even if not completely obliterated, image. . . . What we call science is but a first striving for conscious recollection [Wiederbewusstwerden]" (10,200 f./85 f.).

58. Schelling elaborates this conception of art at the end of his *System* 1800 (3,616 ff./222–28) and in the "Introduction" to his *Philosophy of Art* (5,373 ff./23 ff.). The most explicit definition of Schelling's understanding of *idea* is found almost simultaneously, in his *System of Philosophy in General*, the so-called Würzburger System, of 1804 (6,186–91), translated later.

59. Schelling repeatedly metaphorizes these "linkages" as "monuments [that] for the most part remain still mute to us because they do not resolve in our inwardness" *Initia Philosophiae Universae*, p. 48 (Enderlein's version). This conception of history is elaborated at great length in *The Ages of the World*, where Schelling speaks of the need for consciousness to decipher these linkages of its own past as a transition from the "ineffable to the utterable" (*das Unaussprechliche zum Aussprechlichen*), and of the "nonfigural to the figurative" (*aus dem Unfigürlichen etwas Figürliches*; 8,253). For an extensive discussion of that text, see Fuhrmans, *Schellings Philosophie der Weltalter*.

60. Schelling elaborates this conception of tragedy at great length in his *Philosophy of Art* (5,690 ff./249 ff.). For a detailed analysis of Schelling's aesthetic philosophy and its complex interaction with his theoretical position, see Peter Szondi, *Poetik und Geschichtsphilosophie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974), vol. II, pp. 187 ff.

61. Manfred Frank has argued, convincingly as I feel, for the effectiveness of Schelling's critique of Hegel. In a slight, though significant shift of emphasis, I would argue that Schelling does not so much question the logical problems of Hegel's concept of reflection as challenge Hegel to admit the condition of possibility (i.e., some unstated notion of identity) for the *coincidentia oppositorum* that characterizes Hegel's movement of a "return into itself" and the recognition of that "new" self as the "truth" of the previous "meaning" (*Meinen*) of a "natural consciousness." See Manfred Frank, *What Is Neostructuralism?* trans. Sabine Wilke (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota

Press, 1989), pp. 262–278, and Manfred Frank's earlier, unfortunately still untranslated, study of Schelling's critique of Hegel, *Der Unendliche Mangel an Seyn*.

62. By contrast Schelling's 1804 essay notes, in § 53: "Absolute identity is a self-sameness of *essence*, or it is the essential, qualitative unity. Indifference is merely a quantitative unity or a quantitative equilibrium. For example, the infinite space is the absolute identity of the three dimensions, of length, width and depth, though not their indifference. By contrast, the cube or the sphere also exhibits a homology [*Gleichheit*] of the three dimensions, though not as absolute identity but only in an equilibrium or as indifference" (6,209).

63. See §§ 50 and 51 of the 1804 *System*, below, where Schelling elaborates on the essentially identical nature of Reason and God. As the 1805 *Aphorisms* make abundantly clear, "Not we, neither you nor I, know about God. For insofar as reason affirms God it cannot affirm *anything else* and thus at once annihilates itself as something particular, as something *outside of God*. . . . Reason is not a faculty, not a tool, nor can it be used" (7,148/250).

64. Translation modified; consistent with more recent practice, I translate the German *Grund* as "ground" rather than "basis."

65. As regards intellectual history, Schelling's mystical conception of two, as yet unreflected, beginnings of the Absolute seeks to reconcile the Christian and the Pantheist conceptions of God: "By means of the theory of the two principles inherent in God we avoid two errors that are common to many doctrines of God. With regard to the idea of God there prevail two forms of aberration. According to the dogmatic view, which is considered orthodox, God is conceived of as a particular, isolated, unique, and entirely self-centered essence, thereby separating Him from all creation. Contrastingly, the common pantheist view does not grant God any particular, unique, and self-centered existence; instead, it dissolves Him into a universal substance that is merely the vehicle of all things. Yet God is both of these; to begin with, He is the essence of all essence, yet as such He must also exist, that is, as such an essence He must possess a grasp or foundation. Hence God, in His supreme dignity, is the universal essence of all things, yet this universal essence does not float in the air but rather is grounded in, as it were supported by, God as an *individual essence*; *the individual in God thus is the basis or foundation of the universal*" (4,438). The passage does much to clarify the recurrent, careless qualification of Schelling's later philosophy as mere Pantheism.

66. Translation modified. Schelling goes on: "The essence of the ground, or of existence, can only be precedent to all ground, that is, the absolute viewed directly, the groundless. But, as has been shown, it cannot be

this in any other way than by dividing into two equally eternal beginnings, not that it is both *at the same time* but that it is in both *in the same way*, as the whole in each, or a unique essence" (7,407–8/88–89).

67. The passage, from Heidegger's book on Schelling's *Treatise of Human Freedom*, is quoted as the opening epigraph for this introductory essay.

68. Such a critical rethinking of the opposition between essentialist and constructionist paradigms of identity reveals rather striking affinities between recent gender theory and the Idealist (notably Schelling's) reflection on what we might term the *paralogical figure of identity*. Thus the assertion in a recent study on the subject that "any radical constructionism can only be built on the foundation of a hidden essentialism" reveals, once more, the dependency of the deconstructivist process of unmasking the faultlines in oppositional thought, on an overarching, inherently arational identity. Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking* (New York: Routledge Paul, and Kegan, 1989).

69. In employing the concept of "desire," I am thinking in loosely Lacanian terms; for in the present context desire clearly cannot be an attribute of subjectivity (be it conscious, unconscious, or divine); rather, by manifesting itself in the virtually inexhaustible idioms of "grounding" a subject in the first place, such a "mystical" desire creates forms of prospective self-identification for what, in a moment of apparent metalepsis, is then "recovered" as the origin or "ground" of the human as such. Paul de Man sees this desire as inherently rhetorical practice—particularly exemplified by the figures of "anthropomorphism" and "prosopopeia"—which ensures the continuity of the human by creating forever new possibilities of its transferability onto otherness. "Autobiography as De-Facement" in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

THREE ESSAYS

Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling

Treatise Explicatory of the Idealism in the *Science of Knowledge* (1797)

A Note on the Text

This essay was initially published by the *Philosophisches Journal* under the title “Survey of the Most Recent Philosophical Literature.” The first of several installments appeared in volume 5, no. i in Spring 1797. The editor of the *Journal* was Immanuel Niethammer, himself a respected philosopher in the post-Kantian period and a perceptive judge of new philosophical talent. Beginning in 1797, the *Journal* had changed location from Neu-Strelitz to Jena, with Fichte now serving as a coeditor. Schelling’s review, published anonymously, was occasioned by the annual Leipzig Book Fair, the most significant exhibition of its kind. In a letter to Niethammer (August 11, 1796), Schelling makes it clear that the offer to write a review article in several installments would serve primarily as a platform for the development of his own position:

It is with particular delight that I shall assume the continuing review-essay on the latest in philosophical literature. With evaluation [*Recension*] alone one will never clear the thick of it though, and given the daily worsening misery of our countless philosophical authors “literary mass executions” will soon become all but inevitable. I will gradually offer a brief survey of the most recent history of philosophy starting with *Kant* and leading up to the present.

Schelling’s productivity during this period, 1797–98, was extraordinary. While writing the long review essay, he also saw published his equally substantial *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur* and began work on his *Von der Weltseele*. The text of his review essay was published in the first volume of his *Philosophische Schriften* (1809). The title of the 1797 Treatise, with its apparent reference to Fichte’s *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* (1794–95), is somewhat misleading, because Schelling’s discussion of Kant proves arguably more extensive than that of Fichte.

The translation follows the text printed in K. F. A. Schelling’s edition of *Sämmtliche Werke*. That version, which is a reprint of the 1809 edition of

this essay, omits three brief paragraphs in which Schelling dismisses some unknown treatises. For a reprint of these paragraphs, see *Schellingiana Rariora*, 60–3. The pagination of Schelling's original text in the *Journal* is as follows: 5, no. i: 50–66; 5, no. ii: 161–82; 5, no. iii: 241–260; 5, no. iv: 306–318; 6, no. i: 89–106; 6, no. ii: 182–214; 7, no. ii: 105–186; 8, no. ii: 128–148. A more recent, critically annotated version of the *Treatise* can be found in volume 4 of the *Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe* and has been drawn from for the notes that follow. However, the relative scarcity of this new edition has prompted me to follow the more widely available *Sämmtliche Werke*.

For a brief discussion of the centrality of this essay sequence for the work of S. T. Coleridge, especially in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817), see the Excursus (pp. 271ff.)

Introduction

1,345 The author, who has been commissioned to write this article, wishes to comment briefly on its purpose.

He writes only for those who, before all else, search for truth, and for whom truth holds equal value regardless of whether it is uttered by their enemies or by themselves; moreover, he writes only for those who, regarding inquiries of any kind—whether they be large or small, more or less important—will not impose with their own individuality, and who will always be the first to find fault with themselves once it has been demonstrated that they were mistaken. The author, in other words, is not concerned with petty, narrow-minded men who perform their inquiries as a task with which they have been charged or as a job from which they expect nothing except praise or food, or with men who, regarding any expansion of human knowledge, are not apprehensive of the errors that are likely to accompany newly discovered truths, but who dread only the disruption of the comfortable tranquility wherein—consistent with the limitations of their nature—they have existed so formidably. Any attempt at impressing these people with sweet rhetoric or to seek to educate them by means of honest truth would be utterly foolish: the former because it does not warrant the effort, and the latter because for them *truth* itself is a lie, for they themselves will obscure the very *light* [of truth] and pervert anything forthright, just as they have perverted their souls. Furthermore, their errors do not offer much substance for a critique (indeed, they would be blessed if at least they could err!). For a critique, it shall suffice to have tried to characterize these writers' *meaning* and *spirit*—for it is in these that they are lacking.

1,346 Even though old superstitions still command the respect of a great number of our contemporaries, our epoch has advanced sufficiently far to prevent a new, significant error from attaining power and respect for any

significant length of time. Reason itself has solemnly foresworn all *discoveries in supernatural regions* (that old realm of semblance [*Schein*]). In the domain of nature and humanity, however—the only one where our investigations can still advance successfully—nature and the human spirit, both being equally immutable and eternal in their laws, offer us the safest guard against any error that might arise and obscure the understanding or suppress our inherent freedom.

And yet we must prove all the more vigilant lest a prevailing *dishonesty* of opinion (which manifests itself as an exclusive interest in everything that is mistaken and confused) or a *unilateral tendency* of our spirit, which never considers humanity as a whole but always only some fragments, should interfere with the progress of the human spirit or paralyze its vigor: against the former [we must guard] because the confusion of concepts and the abuse of truth prove far more perilous to the advance of science than the most appalling errors' and against the [unilateral tendency] we must guard because the center or core of human fortitude can be found only where *all* the forces of man converge.

The author would have much preferred to have been mistaken when explaining the following phenomena to himself as resulting in part from the dishonesty of certain inquiries and, on the other hand, as stemming from the onesidedness of the philosophical investigations thus far: namely,

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1. that right now, in the philosophical *world*—a proud expression which we may use only for as long as it has not yet become an instance of irony—an agenda completely indifferent to that of truth has become increasingly prominent;
2. that, in disproportion to the large number of philosophical writings that appear annually, only very few reveal an original force of spirit, and something beyond mere recitation—[some] tedious analysis of issues that have been discussed a thousand times before—and the perennial naive juggling with a few abstract concepts which alone appear to delimit the philosophical talents of some writers;
3. that, discounting cases of naiveté, the extent of which often astonishes, the same people whose philosophical strength has already been exhausted by mere craftsmanship actually hope to disseminate this lethargy universally, even when, in truth, they merely sustain genuine mediocrity, reducing all incontestable excellence to their own limitations, or, should even this prove impossible, contribute to the communal worshipping [of excellence] as a phantastic adventure;
4. that right now the very science formerly destined to provide a goal and an end to endless confusions is being abused not only for inventing errors but also for disfiguring truth itself, [that is,] not only for disrupting particular investigations but for displacing the *total*

perspective for entire fields of science and for *entire* epochs. Finally, [the same] science is being abused to do what our honest precursors steadfastly refused to do, namely, to render what is unreasonable reasonable, as well as the reverse.

1,348 This overview, then, audibly and solemnly declares war on all those writers who advance these causes, not merely with their mediocre work that, to be sure, we cannot but deem their legitimate privilege, but who furthermore seem bent on installing mediocrity (which they have esteemed *pure gold* for so long) on a throne for all time; to those who, due to their own or someone else's prejudice, create new confusions in order to continue deceiving themselves or others; to those who ridicule and deride philosophy by abusing its language or by hampering, with the deluge of their writings, the progress of superior [thinkers] who, needless to say, do not crop up like turnips; finally, to those who should be brought to their senses—if not by the impatience then by the patience of their audience—yet who nevertheless persist in their old sins.

However, to those who, in the blessed simplicity of their hearts, remain convinced that it is not their fault that the sciences have not yet advanced any further, [this overview] promises genuine instruction and every possible guidance for the purpose of self-knowledge. Precisely for this reason, this survey will consign the *particulars* of recent philosophical writings to those reviews that form an integral part of the *Journal* and whose charge it is to excerpt those writings which have really benefitted science itself. By contrast, the present survey wishes to characterize the *spirit* that currently dominates philosophy as well as other, related sciences.^a

Still, because all understanding and comprehension requires some context, this survey will have to begin with a *brief history of the entire Kantian epoch* in order to characterize with sufficient accuracy the present situation and the dominant spirit of philosophy. It is this history, then, which shall open the *Journal's* next issue.

1,349 Having said this much by way of an *Introduction* to this undertaking, let us now turn to its substance. Any remaining space shall be used to relate some

^aAmong these sciences I could preeminently Theology and Law, as well as the Science of Nature and Medicine to the extent that the latter forms a part of the Science of Nature. While the Kantians continue even now—not knowing what is developing around them—to come to terms with the chimera of *things in themselves*, other men of genuine philosophical spirit make discoveries in this science—without making a spectacle of themselves—that soon will be followed by a sound philosophy. Only a mind that is altogether inspired by an interest in Science will be called upon to collate [*zusammenstellen*] these [discoveries] in order to make us forget the deplorable interlude of the Kantians.

news about philosophical writings that have appeared on the most recent book fair and, in particular, to characterize on the basis of one new publication the spirit that currently prevails in the *philosophy of religion*. We have chosen a *single* science because we know of no new work that would pertain to philosophy in its entirety. However, we should point out once and for all that the *person* of a given essay's author is completely insignificant *at this point*, and that consequently our chosen writer ought not to indulge in any speculation regarding his personal importance. The only question of relevance is whether his essay will prove a useful specimen for our purposes. If so, then there will be no need to ask any further questions, such as, by *whom* it was written.

One such publication is concerned with atheism: *Letters on Atheism*, ed. Karl Heinrich Heydenreich. Leipzig, 1796.¹

Actually, [this book addresses] a *particular* atheism that the author initially seeks to present in its entire strength. Indeed, he displays a noble vigor by disregarding the clamor about the perils of the Kantian philosophy of religion when responding (p. 87) to that "venerable man," some auditor in his lectures who thought that he had detected excessively liberal principles, that this listener could not even begin to fathom how *liberally* he (the author) thinks in this matter. Moreover, Heydenreich claims that the *moralizing* atheism (which is at issue here) could not be pushed any *further* in its *pretensions* [*Vermessenheit*] than it had been advanced in Heydenreich's own essay; indeed, toward the end, Heydenreich actually voices apprehension that his book might give rise to some great *scandal* that, in truth and as the author himself cannot but realize, the essay could not possibly create. Thus the author engages in correspondence with an atheist who *knows* Mr. Heydenreich to have derived from the Kantian Critique the most *vivid* and the firmest religious convictions. Unfortunately, however, the confession of the atheist—namely, that he himself is profoundly surprised by his own *stubbornness* for which he could not find any reason within himself—does not lead us to expect much of the psychological phenomenon that the author professes to introduce. Nor does the first letter tell us anything other than that this atheist, to his own great disadvantage, is studying physics, that he has found complete fulfillment in nature, and finally, that he has attained a state of utmost self-sufficiency and submission to God and immortality.

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Given the author's determination to present moral atheism *in its entire sublimity*, it should surprise us that he has ignored a far more sublime atheism—the only one that follows with any necessity from the moral principles of critical philosophy as long as they are taken in their habitual one-sidedness—the atheism that believes in immortality while denying God; and yet we know that most Kantians (however consistent) have been sheltered forever from this consequence by a unique interposition of fortune. As is well known, these *sages* [*Weltweisen*], as they customarily refer to one another, seek

to guard themselves against atheism by invoking a moral necessity supposedly grounded in human nature in general, to be sure, but whose *efficiency* presupposes a unique moral *harmony* [*Stimmung*], something that is not everyone's privilege. Thus even the greatest [achievements] are rendered petty by these thinkers, for they convert that which an ennobled humanity *spontaneously* demands into an individual *desire* to be *solicited* privately by the morally inferior being. They fail to recognize that everything within ourselves remains *petty* if it is not effected by nature herself, and that the moral sublime is progressively trivialized at the hands of man unless it is perceived as a *necessity* [*Nothwendigkeit*]. No wonder then, that their *moral* presents such a peculiar contrast between the *idea* of humanity in its *determined* necessity, on the one hand, and the concomitant *portrait* of a despairing, fickle *human being* on the other hand, a being that calculates, ponders, doubts, and fears not making the right choice in moral matters, and in the end, when a choice has finally been made, he cannot repeat to himself often enough that *this time* Reason has prevailed. They forget, or rather they fail to understand that for morality there exists no *now*, and that the *dignity* of human nature can be founded only in that which raises it above mere appearance. This very contrast is manifest in everything they write and state about religion. They have heard that the idea of divinity is sublime, and yet they do not realize that at their hands it has ceased to be that. [This accounts] for the fatuous attempt to *render* sublime what, in truth, is not sublime at all as well as for the disastrous aesthetic appearance of their writings. The latter may not always be as blatantly evident as in the present essay with its continued aspiration to elate and the repeated collapse of these aspirations. As a last resort there remains our familiar concept of *desire* [*Bedürfnis*], a base concept that starkly contrasts with the sublime idea of God: "the desire for a God," what an idea! Even if the expression initially appeared useful, is it really necessary to repeat forever the same few expressions? The poor atheist is being advised to *solicit* within himself the *desire for belief* before he is to doubt God's existence. It inevitably makes us recall the anecdote of the theologian who could think of no other salvation for the atheist but to have the latter implore God to free him of his atheism. Still, our atheist is not contented with such solutions either. He admits that he "does not consider the belief in God to be one of his spiritual *desires*; that a proposition is not true simply because without it reason would contradict itself"—(yet can we legitimately conceive of a practical postulate as a *proposition*, and at whom is his philosophical objection directed?)—"that man is being divided against himself precisely by attempting to reconcile happiness and morality." And finally, we encounter the boldest thought in the entire book: "God himself, if he existed, would have to demand atheism." The preceding objections already suggest some of the consequences: The ground for belief, it is said, is not a syllogism (at last, we have come that far!); rather, as stated on page 112, the ground involves a proposition (*originally*

founded in man [and] theoretical in kind) without which, though it does not admit of intrinsic proof, reason would contradict itself. That is all! Moreover the author imposes on us with the involuionist and evolutionist theory of the Kantians! That is, the postulate of practical reason has been buried in the human spirit, enshrined as it were, and there it rests for as long as moral necessity rests (that is, for as long as we are not yet *sufficiently moral*); once this [moral necessity] is activated, it emerges as a finished proposition that merely requires some author, such as Mr. Heydenreich, who may transcribe it onto paper.

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Yet all this proves trivial compared with what follows! Kant is said to have imagined immortality as an *infinite continuity outside of time*. Although the author admits that he cannot think this, he nevertheless contends that this inability itself does not yet invalidate the proposition. Soon, then, Kant will have to serve as proof that what can be thought is not yet *possible* on account of its mere *thinkability*, given that this particular disciple of his claims that the unthinkable, notwithstanding its unthinkability, is still not impossible. Against what other heresies shall we yet see such reasoning be deployed! Worse yet, the author also wishes to know how it is possible to continue to exist *outside of time*. Soon, then, he will tell us how it is possible to move without space, breathe without air, etc. Not the form of time itself (here the author is open to argument) yet something *analogous* is said to constitute the form of its future existence! Time is merely a form that we are given along with our body; and whoever gave us time on this earth for as long as we dwell in our body will also provide us with a new dimension after we separate from our body. Analogous to him who thinks God under a human form and thus commits an anthropomorphism, he who thinks man in his future existence under the form of *animal* existence (that is, under the form of time) commits a *zoomorphism*! Indeed, our author can be said to achieve a certain originality. Naturally, however, the zoomorphism, no less than anthropomorphism in Kant, is either *dogmatic* or *symbolic*; that is, whoever believes that in another life we shall exist in time as we do now, is a *dogmatic zoomorphist*; yet he who believes that the future form of our existence would only approximate something like time, in an enlightened philosopher and *confidante of the critical philosophy*! What a vulgar zoomorphist our poor *Lavater* becomes who, in his "Perspectives on Eternity," calculates how *quickly* the spirits in heaven are moving in relation to one another.² Yet while Mr. Lavater deprives us of only our inertia along with our body, Mr. Heydenreich deprives us of time itself. Perhaps Mr. Heydenreich or some other Kantian shall bestow on us yet another *Arithmetica coelestis*, one founded upon future forms of intuition in rough analogy to the way in which the *Arithmetica terrestris* is grounded in our present intuitions. Such a treatise should indeed dispel all our doubts regarding the *symbolic zoomorphism*.

I

1,345 A number of philosophers concerned with the future of Kant's philosophy
 have presented the reading public with the reasons that, in their opinion,
 have deprived his philosophy of widespread public appreciation and further
 development. I do not feel called upon to repeat these [arguments]; instead, I
 1,346 shall point to what I consider to be the main reason why Kant's philosophy
 thus far has been misunderstood almost as much by its supporters as by its
 opponents.

 This reason is that [Kant's] philosophy, considered to be strictly specula-
 tive in its objectives, was esteemed and construed as intelligible and signifi-
 cant only for those <initiated> philosophers of the [Rationalist] school. Natu-
 rally, the repeated assertions of the anti-Kantians that Kant (whom they
 wished to refute at the same time) had written in an almost completely
 unintelligible language compounded this [dilemma] significantly. They did
 not keep in mind that, in addition to the *literal language*, there also exists a
 1,347 *language of spirit*, that the former is merely the vehicle for the latter [and] that,
 consequently, their assurances, instead of refuting Kant's *philosophy*, might
 much rather, in case of doubt, call into question their own *philosophical talent*.
 Still, we must further distinguish here. Some of these philosophers bore this
 title as men who, far from speculative investigations, had dedicated all their
 acumen to *human life* and who, due to an unfortunate coincidence, now
 1,348 voiced their strong disapproval of all investigations that do not immediately
 affect life (a dislike that all preceding speculative investigations may admit-
 tedly have instilled in them). Others were not predisposed against nomencla-
 ture, terminology, or systematic spirit in general but merely against *this* no-
 menclature, etc. [They] had largely become accustomed to the style of Leibniz
 who always communicated his philosophical principles in fragmentary form,
 in letters to friends or to noble and great men, always exhibiting much regard
 1,349 for dominant opinions and hence not as focused and precise as befits the
 scientific style. Or they had developed the rigor mortis of the Wolffian school
 and method. Finally, because of the effete pseudo-philosophy of some petty
 writers or because of the "know-all" posturing of some aphoristic eclectics,
 the last among all these "philosophers" had lost all good sense and taste—not
 merely for a particular system—but for *philosophy in general* even before Kant
 had published the first word of his philosophy.

 This prejudice was further and equally reinforced by the proud tone of
 [certain] self-proclaimed Kantians, craving to be rewarded at least with the
 dignity of a Kantian hierophant for their meticulously timed exertions on
 1,350 behalf of Kant's writings, and exclusively devoted to perpetuating an obscure
 discourse which they were incapable of understanding. Admittedly, we may
 have judged some well-intentioned people too severely. Still, the grace and
 the external, <most certain> feature of a science that has finally been estab-

lished on firm grounds will always be a *determinate* terminology. Nevertheless, any healthy philosophy, because it shall be proper to man and not to a school, must prove intelligible in every human language. In France, where modern chemistry originated, a congregation of the greatest chemists convened to reach a consensus regarding terminology.³ Subsequently, several German scholars—some of them famous—have sought to distinguish themselves by translating this terminology. To be sure, this may be laudable, even necessary, in a science that will always remain within the limits of its school; yet whether in philosophy such an agreement would be equally desirable is an altogether different question. 1,351

Certainly, the tone of some Kantians appeared to suggest that any further cultivation of the spirit and the whole wealth of real knowledge would prove completely useless for an understanding of their philosophy; <Naturally, a tabula rasa proves most receptive to inscription; yet then again it can only be read but *cannot read itself*.> Still, to elicit interest and be understood, already the first question, the response to which will outline the entire agenda of this philosophy, presupposes a culture that one cannot simply ascribe to everybody a priori. Only a man who has experienced with sufficient frequency how little empirical inquiries alone can satisfy the spirit, how precisely their most interesting problems refer us back to higher principles, how tediously and precariously one progresses in them without guiding ideas of which one is not even distinctly conscious, one whom repeated experience has taught to discriminate between semblance and truth and between the vanity and reality of human knowledge, and who has been exhausted by countless vain inquiries on which he embarked without realizing what the human spirit is capable of, could pose for himself, with full interest and a clear consciousness of its meaning, the following question: “What, then, is ultimately the reality that inheres in our representations?”⁴ Even if we are to deviate from these conditions, we still must insist that in any human being wishing to raise this question with any sense and understanding must fulfill two conditions: a primordial tendency toward the real [*zum Realen*], on the one hand, and a capacity to elevate oneself above reality [*das Wirkliche*], because without the former such a question will entangle us all too easily in idealistic speculations, and because without the latter the senses, rendered dull by the individual object, retain no receptivity whatsoever for the real. 1,353

Furthermore, such questions arguably would interest those the least who devote their entire philosophical energy to the analysis of dead and abstract concepts. For such people there can be nothing real. He who does not feel and recognize around himself anything real, who is merely feeding on or juggling with concepts, whose faculty of intuition has long since been deadened by memorization, dead speculation, or social degeneracy, and whose existence remains but a *dim thought*: how can he ever speak of reality (e.g., any more than the blind man about colors)? And how can he hope to understand

1,354 the answer when he has not even fathomed the question? Ask the savages, for whom colorful feathers and a painted body are things more beautiful, what fine arts might be? Or try to instruct them in it, and they will respond with a dumb gaze or an apish grin.

<Already in this question, then, there lies the pride of a *cultivated man* who takes responsibility for his entire knowledge, a pride that perhaps one may hide from oneself yet not from others for whom the mere question must prove an *odi profanum vulgus et arceo*.⁵ Moreover, this dignity of the question must also extend to the answer; for it is in the answer that we recognize the man and discover whether he was capable of the question.> Indeed, numerous thinkers have not concealed their inability to understand this first question of philosophy. When asking “What is the origin of our knowledge?” we do not want to know how already existing representations and concepts might be dissolved into their components; rather the question was how we had originally formed these concepts and representations. Because it is only natural that one can develop once again from a concept what one earlier—not only spontaneously but even necessarily—had implied in it, objections against this question were founded on examples that were supposed to prove that all philosophy comes down to the analyses of already formed concepts.⁶ In truth, however, [these examples] merely prove that we can spontaneously analyze what we previously combined by necessity. Because there still remains an indeterminate, logical something after thought has discriminated between the object and its qualities, it is assumed that in reality, too, this object could indeed exist in and of itself [and] independent of its qualities. For example, because the concept of substance *originally* emerges from the synthesis (effected by the imagination) of two opposed forces, it was subsequently thought possible to deduce analytically [and] according to the law of noncontradiction from some concept of substance—I do not know which one (and it cannot exist in any event)—the grounding forces (*Grundkräfte*) of substance, etc. The entire scholastic dispute concerning the difference between analytic and synthetic judgments rested on such deceptions.

1,355 Kant proceeded from *intuition* as the *first* element in our cognition. This soon led to the claim that intuition was the *lowest form of cognition*. Yet it is the highest in the human spirit, that from which all further cognition derives its validity and reality. Furthermore, Kant said that intuition had to be preceded by an affection of our sensible faculty [*Sinnlichkeit*], although he left the question concerning the origin of this faculty altogether undecided. Here, he deliberately left behind something that was to emerge later as the ultimate and supreme problem of reason <never to be resolved>. Yet supporters and opponents of this philosophy carefully picked up what its founder had left behind for good reasons. Because he later spoke of *things in themselves*, they now assumed that it had to be things in themselves that had affected us. We need only *read* a few more pages, however, to notice that, according to Kant’s

philosophy, everything that is an object, a thing, or an entity has become an object etc. only through an original synthesis of intuition. For as the conditions of intuition, Kant names time and space, and he shows that they possess no reality independent of us, but that they constitute original forms of intuition. Naturally, then, it was assumed, as one reviewer in the *Allgemeine Jenaische Zeitung* was naive enough to put it, that we would simply *bring along* these forms as something finished and ready made for the purpose of intuition. Yet who ever told us to understand Kant this way? If Kant spoke of a synthesis by the imagination in intuition, then surely this synthesis was an *activity* of our subjectivity [*des Gemüths*] and, consequently, space and time as forms of this synthesis [are] *modes of activity* of our subject.⁷ Of course, time and space alone produce no object. Yet space and time *in general* designate the mode of activity of our subject in the state of intuition. Hence the observation just cited amounted to a hint that, when applied properly, could offer the most complete account of the essence of intuition (of its *material*) and thereby of the entire system of the human spirit.

For let us examine what space and time—to put it in very ordinary terms—contribute to the object. Space affords the object extension, a sphere. Yet the concept of an extension or sphere necessarily implies the concept of a *limitation*. Therefore, because the *object* designates a limited sphere, this *limitation* itself must derive from elsewhere. It is *time* alone that affords space and a limitation, border [and] contour. Hence space has three dimensions. For, being originally infinite, it has no direction or, rather, comprises all possible directions that remain indistinguishable until they become (limited by time) finite and determinate directions. Conversely, *time* is originally nothing but a *border* [and] *limitation*; it is the absolute negation of all extension, a mathematical point. Only space affords it extension; hence time can originally be represented only by the image of a straight line, and it has only one possible dimension. Space, then, is not conceivable without time, nor time without space. The most primordial criterion for all space is time, which is required by a continuously moving object to pass through space; and conversely, the most primordial criterion of all time is space through which such an object (e.g., the sun) passes in time. Hence time and space are necessary conditions for all intuition. Without time, the object is devoid of form, without space it is devoid of extension. Space is originally absolutely underdetermined (Plato's *apeiron*); time is that which affords everything its original determination and contour (*peiras* in Plato). Space without time is a sphere without limitation, [and] time without space is a limitation without a sphere. Determination, limitation, and border thus constitute originally something *negative*. By contrast, sphere and extension, etc. are originally something *positive*. Hence, because space and time are conditions for intuition, it follows that intuition is generally possible only through two absolutely opposing activities. However, space and time are merely *formal*; when considered in their generality, they

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1,357 are original modes of activity of our subject. Yet they can serve as a principle according to which the *material* of the original modes of activity of the subject can be determined in intuition. Consequently, two activities, originally and by their very *nature* opposed, must be united in intuition; [they] must convene, determine, and limit one another reciprocally. One of these will be *positive*, the other one *negative* in kind. What, then, can the latter one be but what Kant refers to as the activity affecting us *from the outside*?⁸ The former one will evidently be what he understands to be at work in the synthesis of intuition, that is, the original activity of the *spirit*. And thus it has been demonstrated beyond all doubt: (1) that the object is not something that is given to us from the outside and *as such*, and (2) that it is strictly the product of the original, spontaneous activity of the spirit which creates and produces from opposing activities a third, communal one (*koinon* in Plato). This spontaneous activity of the spirit that is operative in intuition, Kant justly ascribes to the *imagination* because this faculty, equally capable of activity and passivity, is the only one capable of comprising and exhibiting in one communal product the negative and positive activities. And for the same reason, he also calls that activity the original, transcendental synthesis of the imagination in intuition—a formula that, unlike every other one, the Kantians do not merely copy from their master <no doubt for particular reasons>.

1,358 If this formula had been understood, the chimera that has tormented our philosophers for so long—viz., the things in themselves (things in addition to the actual things that are also already supposed to exist, to affect us always, and to lend the substance to our representations)—this chimera would have disappeared like mists of the night dispelled by the light of the sun. It would have been recognized that nothing can be real unless there is a spirit to know it. For Leibniz “things in themselves” were something quite different. Leibniz did not know of any being other than one that *knows of itself* or is *known* by a spirit. The latter he considered strictly as appearance. Yet he did not turn into a dead, selfless object what exceeded mere appearance. For that reason he invested his monads with the capacity for representation and turned them into mirrors of the universe, into knowing, representing and precisely to that extent not “knowable” and “representable” beings. Immortal thinker! what has become of your doctrine! What has become of the oldest, most sacred traditions; *Doctrina, per tot manus tradita, tandem in vappam desit!*⁹ Our dimwits were “too enlightened” to invest things in themselves with representations. And as to Leibniz—alas! he was quietly decaying in dust. It was through Kant that they first acquired what Leibniz had [originally] claimed; yet they had become “too wise” to read Leibniz for themselves. How can we remain composed when we see these weaklings trample on the ashes of the very greatest, from whom, had they not been muted, a word would have been enough to annihilate these imitators! Or is the belief in a real world—the foundation of our life and activity—supposed to have originated not from

immediate certainty but from (I do not know what kind of) chimeras of real objects that are accessible not to the imagination but only to a deadened and uninspired speculation, and is therefore *our nature* (originally so rich and vital) supposed to be corrupted and deadened to its very foundations? For the very essence of the spirit involves an original conflict in self-consciousness resulting in the creation of a real world outside the spirit through intuition (a creation *ex nihilo*). Consequently, no world exists unless a spirit is to form knowledge of it and, conversely, no spirit exists without a world outside of it.—Let us continue:

To know an object outside of myself, Kant notes, intuition alone does not suffice. Indeed it does not, for by creating this [object] through a synthesis of the imagination, it cannot simultaneously be intuited by the subject as an *object*, that is, as something that possesses reality and an autonomous existence independent of the subject. Only after the creative faculty has completed [its activity], does the faculty of understanding enter into the picture, according to Kant—an ancillary faculty that merely apprehends, *comprehends* [and] arrests what has been furnished by another faculty.¹⁰ Yet what can such a faculty accomplish?—Once both intuition and reality have vanished, [it can] only *imitate*, only *repeat* that original act of intuition wherein the object first existed: for that the imagination is needed. The real, however, subsists only in intuition. Hence, the imagination, in its current employment, cannot repeat that mode of action according to its material aspect either. For otherwise intuition would originate anew and we would once again be where we were before. Hence the imagination only repeats the *formal* aspect of that mode of action. This, we know, consists of time and space. Thus the imagination delineates merely the contour of an object hovering in time and space in general. This contour Kant calls the *schema*, claiming that it alone mediates the concept with the intuition. However, here as so often, he has exhibited too generous a treatment of something that possesses no intrinsic reality, In *speculation* one may distinguish between schema and concept, yet in the *nature* (of our cognition) they are never separate. A concept without sensibilization by the imagination is a word without sense, a sound without meaning.¹¹ Only now that the subject is able to oppose, relate, compare, and bind together the object and the contour, the real and the formal aspects, does there originate an intuition with consciousness and the firm, incontrovertible conviction in the latter that there exists something outside and independent of it. Thus, as Kant observes, the lucid point of an objective cognition is to be found only at the convergence of the intuition with the concept. Nevertheless there are people who to this very day charge Kant with “an utter separation of the understanding and sensibility.” We are surprised to hear this from philosophers whose own philosophy involves nothing by distinctions. Yet this can be explained. There exists a talent to separate what has never been separated, and to divide into thoughts what is united everywhere within

1,360 nature. Such a talent is indispensable for philosophy, although [it proves] extremely unfortunate where it is not conjoined with the *philosophical* [talent] that reunites what has been separated; for only *these two* [talents] together make the philosopher. Indeed, some who have been granted the former have also been denied the latter. Hence, when speaking of dissecting something for the benefit of speculation that can never be separated in reality, we can expect to be understood by such intellects. Yet, when it comes to *uniting* or reuniting that which has been separated, their talent reveals its limitations, thus producing criticisms of the kind just mentioned.

Kant has almost exclusively met with such unfortunate critics. He had to dissect human knowledge and concepts into their individual components; such was his *intention* [*Zweck*], whereas he left it to his heirs to delineate with one stroke the great, remarkable whole of our nature that is composed of these parts as it has always existed and always will exist, to breathe into his work soul and life, and thus to bestow it upon posterity as the highest achievement of human powers. The principal and supreme task of the human spirit is to perfect the world that opens up before it and that responds to the laws encountered everywhere by the spirit, regardless of whether it returns into itself (qua philosophy) or explores nature (qua observation). Kant claims that these laws are original *forms* of the human spirit or, which is the same, that they are our spirit's original modes of activity. It is only by virtue of these modes of activity of our spirit that there exists and continues to exist the infinite world as such, for the world is truly nothing other than our productive spirit in its finite productions and reproductions.

1,361 Not so for Kant's disciples! For them, the world and all reality prove primordially alien to our spirit, and the world bears no affinity to the spirit other than that of an *accidental* affect. Nevertheless *such* a world, although for them it is merely *accidental* and thus might just as well be different, they claim to govern with laws that—they neither know how nor whence—have been implanted in their understanding. As the supreme legislators of nature [and] with the full consciousness that the world is comprised of things in themselves, they impose these concepts and laws of the understanding onto these things in themselves; indeed, they apply them quite freely and arbitrarily, and this world of eternal and determinate nature obeys their speculative decree. All this Kant is supposed to have taught? What, then, are we to call such a system? It is not Idealism; any serious Idealist would be ashamed of it. Nor is it supposed to be Dogmatism, and indeed it is not that either.—What, then, can it be? A more ridiculous or preposterous system has hardly ever been thought out. For nature has never been anything different from its laws, [and] it consists strictly in its own unchangeable mode of activity or, rather, it is nothing but this *One* eternal mode of activity. Still, because nature can be conceived as something speculative—I do not know what in particular—yet something that is credited with an existence independent of our laws, there are those

who regard these laws as having been implanted [in nature] by an external spirit. Or, according to the latest system, our understanding is supposed to have imposed [these laws] onto nature as something completely heterogeneous. Hume, the skeptic, first had claimed what is now being attributed to Kant. Yet Hume readily admitted that all our natural sciences amount to deception, [and] that all laws of nature constitute but a routine of our imagination. This was a consistent judgment < . . . consistent philosophy.¹² And Kant is supposed to have done no more than repeat Hume so as to now render him, who had been consistent, inconsistent?> To be sure, Kant proclaimed the laws of nature to be our spirit's modes of activity, that is, to provide the conditions under which alone our intuition would become possible; yet he added that nature is nothing different from these laws, that nature itself is but a continuous activity of the infinite spirit, that the latter will attain self-consciousness in nature alone, and that through nature the spirit would bestow extension, duration, continuity, and necessity on this self-consciousness. By now it should have become clear and distinct that all these misconceptions are the result of a misconstrual of the new system as a speculative one and from a speculative point of view. The sound understanding has never discriminated between the representation and the thing, let alone opposed them to one another. In the convergence of intuition and concept, of the object and the representation, there always inhered the consciousness proper to man and thus the solid and incontrovertible belief in the real world. Idealism (which Kant had meant to expel forever from people's minds) was the first to discriminate between entity and intuition and between object and representation. In this sense, the Idealist remains solitary and deserted in the midst of the world, surrounded everywhere by <speculative> ghosts. For him there exists nothing *immediate*, and even the intuition where spirit and object meet is but an empty concept. Precisely for that reason, he will never overcome this disconsolate system. For even if we were to succeed in allowing him to experience the Real as an immediate presence, that same diligent faculty will intervene and convert this reality into semblance before his very eyes. For him all existence is attained by inference and sophistry; it is nothing original. Once we have admitted this distinction between concept and intuition, representation and reality, our representations will prove *semblance*; for now we can no longer consider them *copies* of things in themselves.^b If, however, our representation is simultaneously *representation* and *object* (as the sound understanding has never disputed and, to this very day, does not

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^bKant denied that the representations are copies of things in themselves. At the same time, however, he ascribed reality to the representations. Hence—this was a necessary conclusion—there could not exist any things in themselves whatsoever and, for our representation, no *original* ['X'] *outside* of it. Otherwise the two claims could not be reconciled.

1,363 dispute), man may return from the endless wanderings of misguided speculation to the straight path of a nature at peace with itself. For now man shall learn to accept things, as they *are*, theoretically speaking, and as they *should be*, practically speaking—a result that, even though at odds with some sophistic speculation, will prove so familiar to the sound understanding that we must ask ourselves why such a display of philosophical skill was needed to finally bring it to light. <The purpose of Kant's theoretical philosophy was to secure the reality of our knowledge. I consider it especially worthwhile making the effort to show how he accomplished this goal with the greatest possible clarity and precision, because only few who wish to do so are also capable of doing so. I have spoken as I saw *fit*. On a subsequent occasion [I will concern myself with] Kant's *practical* philosophy.>

II

It has been repeatedly asked how it was ever possible that a system as incoherent as that of the *so-called* critical philosophers could not only have entered some person's mind but, in fact, could have taken root there. Having left this question unanswered in the previous section, I should like to add some remarks on that matter. For I am firmly convinced that no one who is not entirely deprived of his good senses [*Vernunft*] has ever claimed anything about speculative matters for which we could not point to some foundation in human nature itself. If it were impossible to uncover the origin of speculative illusions, we would have to give up all hope of ever protecting ourselves or others from them; with respect to our inquiries, we would be completely at the mercy of blind chance, and a universal skepticism regarding human reason would prevent us from reaching agreement with ourselves, to say nothing of agreement with others. In refuting an inconsistent opinion the first task is to render this opinion as *reasonable* and *comprehensible* as possible, even if a result the individuals who hold these notions should be given too much credit.

1,364 The principal claim of the philosophy that is presently at issue can be expressed as concisely as the following: *The form* of our knowledge originates within *ourselves* whereas its *matter* is given to us *from the outside*.

It is already advantageous to have stated this *antithesis* itself. For even though both form and matter are most intimately united in our knowledge, it is also apparent that philosophy suspends this union *hypothetically* to be able to *explain* it; and it is equally apparent that all philosophical systems, going back to the most ancient times, have regarded form and matter as the two extremes of our knowledge.

Soon it was discovered that *matter* was the ultimate substratum of all our *explanations*. Thus the inquiry into the origins of matter itself was aban-

done. Something else, however, was noticed in things, something that no concept of matter was able to account for, and yet something that [philosophy] felt obliged to explain (e.g., that appearances succeed one another with regularity; that there is a purposiveness in individual things; that the entire system of the external world coheres by virtue of a universal nexus, itself governed by means and causes). Meanwhile these determinations inhered once again so profoundly in the thing itself that neither the thing nor its determinations could be thought of as independent of one another. Hence, the attempt to transfer the determinations from the intellect of some higher being (i.e., the architect of the world) onto *the latter* [things] failed to elucidate the origin of this indissoluble bond between the two which no speculative art is capable of unravelling. Consequently, all things were understood to have originated simultaneously with their determinations in the *creative* faculty of a divine being. However, although it is readily conceivable how a being endowed with a creative faculty should prove capable of presenting external things for *itself*, [it is not clear] how it could present them for *other* beings; in other words, even if we understand the origin of a world *external to ourselves*, we still do not understand how the representations of this world could have entered *into* our consciousness.

In the last effort, then, it had to be explained not how external things could have originated independent of ourselves—(for these we cannot have any knowledge, since they themselves are the ultimate substratum for any explanation of external phenomena)—but how a representation of these [things] could have originated *within* us.

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Let us specify the question. Clearly, we must not only explain the *possibility* of a representation of external things within us but also its *necessity*. Furthermore, we must explain not only how we become conscious of a representation but also why, as a result of it, we are obliged to refer it to an external object. For we consider our knowledge *real* only to the extent that it corresponds with its object. (The old definition of truth, that it is the absolute correspondence of the object and cognition, should have made us realize long ago that the object itself cannot by anything but the necessity of our knowledge).¹³ To be sure, in speculation we are capable of separating the two, yet our knowledge involves an absolute coinherence of both, and the faith in an external world lies grounded in the inability of the common understanding to discriminate between object and representation during the [act of] representation.

The problem, then, is as follows: to explain the absolute correspondence of the object and the representation, of being and cognition. As soon as we have *opposed* the object—as a thing external to us—and the representation (and we do so by posing that question), it becomes apparent that no *immediate* correspondence between the two is possible. Hence, we attempt to mediate object and representation with the aid of concepts, thereby regarding

the object as the *cause* and the representation as its *effect*. Yet with all these attempts, we never attain what we ultimately seek, namely, the identity of the object and the representation; for this identity is necessarily presupposed, and the common understanding has always presupposed it in each of its predications.

1,366 The question thus arises as to whether such an identity of object and representation should prove possible at all. It is readily apparent that it would be possible only under *one* condition, [namely,] if there existed a being capable of an intuition of itself, that is, simultaneously representing and represented or intuiting and intuited. Therefore, the only example of an absolute identity of representation and object we find inheres *within ourselves*. The only being capable of recognizing and understanding itself immediately, and consequently capable of external knowledge, is the "I" within us. With any other object I am required to ask by what means their *being* is mediated with my *representation*. However, *I myself* am not originally for a knowing subject outside myself, as is the case with matter, but I am *for myself*; within my self there obtains the absolute identity of subject and object or of knowledge and Being. Because I do not know myself in any other way than *through myself*, it is inconsistent to require of the "I" yet another predicate besides that of *self-consciousness*. The essence of the spirit consists precisely in the fact that it has no other predicate for itself but its self.¹⁴

The identity of representation and object, then, exists only in the intuition-of-self [*Selbstanschauung*] of the spirit. Hence, to demonstrate this absolute correspondence of representation and object, which is the sole ground for the reality of our *entire* knowledge, it ought to be possible to *prove* that the spirit, by having any intuition of *whatever* object, merely intuits itself. If this can be demonstrated, the reality of our knowledge will have been ascertained.

The question arises how this might be accomplished.

First, it is imperative that we attain the standpoint where subject and object or the intuiting and the intuited poles form an identity within us. Such can occur only by means of a free act.

1,367 Furthermore, as *spirit* I designate that which is only *its own* object.^c To the extent that the spirit is to be an object *for itself* it is no object in the *original* sense but an absolute *subject* for which *everything* (including itself) is an *object*. Such indeed it will have to be. Any object is something *dead*, static,

^cMany honorable men, not knowing how to object to what has been said thus far, will at least seize on the word *spirit*; the Kantians (when they evaluate this critique of their philosophy), will condemn it, or they will take it to task for issues that lie far below it; e.g., they will charge it with dogmatism or with treating the spirit as a thing in itself, etc. Hence I have repeatedly stated that I call *spirit* that which is for itself, not for a foreign being and which consequently is originally no object whatsoever, let alone an object in itself.

incapable of any activity itself, and only the *object* of an activity. The spirit, however, can be apprehended only *in its activity* (hence he who cannot seize the spirit in its activity will hence be said to philosophize *without spirit*); the spirit, then, exists only in *becoming* or, rather, it is nothing but an *eternal becoming*. (Hence, we can anticipate the *advancing*, progressive [nature] of our knowledge, which [proceeds] from lifeless matter to the idea of an animated nature).¹⁵ The spirit, then, shall *become*—not *be*—an object for itself. Precisely for this reason, all philosophy sets out from an act and activity, and for the same reason the spirit, too, is primordially nothing (in itself) objective either. It becomes an object only *through itself*, that is, by means of its *own activity*.

Now, that which is (originally) object is necessarily also something *finite*. Because the spirit is not originally an object, it cannot originally be finite according to its nature.—[Is it], then, infinite? If so, it is still a spirit only to the extent that it becomes an *object for itself*, that is, becomes *finite*. Hence, it is neither infinite without becoming finite, nor can it become finite (for itself) without being infinite. In short, it is neither infinite nor finite alone, but instead it involves the most primordial *union of infinity and finitude* (a new determination of the spirit's character).

Between the finite and the infinite—[there is] no *transition*! Such was the claim of most of the ancient philosophers. Philosophers before them had at least attempted to conceal this transition through images; hence, we have inherited the doctrine of emanation from most ancient thought, and hence, too, the philosophy of Spinoza proved all but inevitable given the principles he had inherited.

Only later did systems devoid of any spirit seek to discover mediating links between infinity and finitude. Yet between the two there cannot be any *before* and *after*; such occurs only between *finite* things. The existence of finite things (hence also of finite representations) can never be explained through concepts of cause and effect. Only when this has been understood as a fact can philosophy properly begin; indeed, without this realization philosophy is not even perceived as a necessity, and our entire knowledge proves merely empirical, a progression from cause to effect. Finitude and infinity, however, are *originally united* only in the *Being* of a spirited nature. This absolute *simultaneity* of the infinite and the finite, then, contains the *essence* of an *individual nature* (of selfhood). That this is so follows from the very possibility of *self-consciousness* by virtue of which alone the spirit becomes what it is. However, an indirect proof [*reductio ad absurdum*] for this is possible as well. For either we are originally infinite, in which case we do not understand how finite representations and a succession of finite representations could have originated within us; or, if we are originally finite, we do not understand how an idea of infinity, could ever have entered into us.

Furthermore, the spirit is everything only *by virtue of itself*, [that is,] by means of its *own activity*. Hence there ought to be *activities* originally opposed

to it or, if we merely consider its form, [there ought to be] modes of activity of which one was originally *infinite* and the other originally *finite*. Yet the two ought to allow for their discrimination only in their reciprocity.

1,369 This, indeed, is the case. Those two activities are originally united within me; however, that this is so I merely know because I comprise both in one activity. This activity we call *intuition*, the nature of which I hope to have explained in the previous section. Intuition itself does not yet involve any consciousness, though without it, consciousness is not even possible. Only in consciousness, that is, can I distinguish those two activities: one is *positive*, the other one *negative* in kind; one *fulfills*, the other one *limits* a sphere. One is conceived as an activity directed *outward* and the other as an activity directed *inward*. Whatever is (in the proper sense of the word *is*) is so only by virtue of this *tendency toward itself* (the inanimate object—which is not but merely exists—expresses this fact through gravity, and the cosmological system [acknowledges] it through the centripetal tendency of the planets). Thus, the spirit exists *for itself* only in its *tendency toward itself*, because it limits itself in its activity; or, rather, the spirit itself is nothing but this activity and this limitation when thought in *simultaneity*. In *limiting itself*, the spirit is simultaneously *active* and *passive*, and since without this activity no consciousness of our nature would be possible, this absolute union of *activity* and *passivity* must assume the character of an *individual* nature.

Passivity is strictly *negative* activity. An absolutely passive being is simply *nothing* (a *nihil privativum*). Without realizing it, we have happened upon the most complex issue of all philosophy. No representation is possible within ourselves without a *passivity*, while at the same time [it is possible] only by means of an *activity*. This much all philosophers have understood. Clearly, then, our *being* and *essence* are grounded in this original union of activity and passivity, [and] thus representation *in general* belongs to our being and essence and, as will become apparent later on, especially the representation of *this* particular system of things. Moreover, because *all* finite being is comprehensible only by means of opposed activities that, in turn, can be reconciled only in a spirit, it necessarily follows that all external existence can only originate in and proceed from a being endowed with spirit.

1,370 Intuition actively comprises activity and passivity. That much I consider to have established previously. Consequently, the object of the intuition is nothing but the spirit *itself* in its activity and its passivity. However, in intuiting itself, the spirit cannot simultaneously differentiate between its two [active and passive] aspects. Hence, intuition [implies] the absolute identity of object and representation (which, in turn, sponsors the belief that reality is inherent only in intuition; for thus far the spirit does not discriminate between what is real and which is not real).¹⁶

However, we know that we can distinguish between object and representation, for we proceeded from this distinction. (Without this distinction

[there would be] no need for philosophy.) Hence, to distinguish between object and representation we must move beyond intuition.

This we cannot accomplish except by abstracting from the product of our intuition. (This faculty for abstraction is conceivable only by virtue of the fact that we are originally free, i.e., independent of the object. Furthermore, because this faculty can be exercised only in opposition to the object, i.e., in a practical manner, it is apparent that the representations of different objects may attain a different *intensity*; indeed, it is possible that theoretical and practical philosophy are not originally separated at all, for we cannot abstract without acting *freely*, and we cannot act *freely* without abstracting. This shall soon become more evident). In short, we cannot abstract from the *product* of the intuition without acting *freely*, that is, without *freely* repeating the original mode of activity (of the spirit); conversely, we cannot *freely* repeat this mode of activity without simultaneously *abstracting from its product*. Hence, we cannot abstract from the *product* of the activity without *opposing* it to the free activity (i.e., without conceding it an *autonomous existence* [*Selbstdasein*] and independence from our activity). Conversely, we cannot oppose the product of our activity to this activity without acting *freely* at the same time (i.e., without abstracting from the former). Only now, through our abstraction, does the product of our activity become an *object*.

Only through my free activity, insofar as it is opposed by an object, does a consciousness originate within me. The object now exists; for me its origin lies in the past, that is, beyond my present consciousness; it is there, *without my influence*. (Hence, it is impossible to explain, from the standpoint of consciousness, the origin of the object). I cannot act *freely* in abstracting without opposing the object to myself, i.e., without a feeling of dependency on the object. Originally, however, the object existed only in intuition, and it did not differ from intuition. Hence, I cannot *abstract* *freely* without feeling restricted with respect to the intuition, and conversely, I cannot feel restricted with respect to the intuition, without at the same time abstracting *freely*.

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However, I do not become *conscious* of an intuition unless I abstract from it. Hence, I cannot become *conscious* of intuition without feeling restricted in its regard. Conversely, I cannot feel restricted with respect to the object (of intuition) without abstracting from it; that is, without a concomitant feeling of my freedom. Likewise, I become *conscious* of my freedom only insofar as I feel restricted with respect to the object. [There may be] *no consciousness of the object without a consciousness of freedom [and] no consciousness of freedom without a consciousness of the object*.

It is through the free repetition of the original mode of activity—that is, intuition—of the spirit, namely, in abstraction, that *concepts* originate. However, I cannot abstract without simultaneously forming an intuition with consciousness, and vice versa; *hence, we are conscious of the concept only in opposition to the intuition, and conscious of the intuition only in opposition to the concept*.

Yet precisely because we become conscious of the free mode of activity in intuition only by opposing it to its product (the object), intuition appears for us as *something derived from the object* (the Empiricist view), even though the object itself is, in fact, nothing but a product of this mode of activity. However, because we effectively repeat this mode of activity *with freedom* (because, for example, we delineate figures in space freely, as the imagination can freely delineate the general shape of an object), this mode of activity appears to emanate merely from our spirit, something that we *transfer* onto things outside of ourselves after the fact (standpoint of formal philosophy).

1,372 However, both (Empiricists and Formalists) become conscious of the *object* only in opposition to the *free* mode of activity of the spirit; hence they agree that *the object is something independent of this mode of activity*, even though the *object itself* if nothing but this determined mode of activity.

More concisely, because we become conscious of the object only in opposition to the concept, the concept appears to depend on intuition, whereas intuition [appears] independent of the concept, even though both are originally (prior to consciousness) *one and the same*.

An action in view of which we feel *free* we shall call *ideal*, whereas one in view of which we feel *restricted* [we shall call] *real*. As a result, the concept appears to us as *ideal* and the intuition as *real*; yet each [can be designated] in this manner only in reciprocity with the other; for neither are we *conscious* of the concept without intuition, nor can we be conscious of intuition without a concept.

Anyone maintaining the standpoint of mere consciousness must necessarily claim [that] our knowledge is *partly* ideal, *partly* real; such claims are likely to lead to a phantastic system that can never explain how the ideal could have become real and vice versa. Anyone who has attained a superior perspective will find that *originally* there is *no* difference between ideality and reality, and that consequently our knowledge is not *partly* but *completely* and *thoroughly* ideal and real *at once*.

Originally, the spirit's *mode of activity* and the *product of this mode of activity* are the same. Yet we can become conscious neither of the mode of activity nor of its product without opposing one to the other. The mode of activity, in abstraction from its product, is *purely formal*; the product, in abstraction from the mode of activity by means of which it originated, is *purely material*.

1,373 Hence, anyone proceeding from consciousness alone (as a fact) will find an incongruous system according to which our knowledge is miraculously assembled from forms devoid of content, on the one hand, and from things devoid of form, on the other hand.—In short, such a system will lead to the preceding proposition which we just designated (cf. 1,363) as the principal claim of the most recent philosophy: “The *form* of our knowledge derives from within *ourselves*, whereas *matter* we receive *from the outside*.”

Realizing, then, that form and matter are originally one, and that we can discriminate between them only after both have been created by one identical and indivisible act, there remains but one alternative: either both, matter and form, are *given* to us *from the outside*, or both, matter and form, must primordially emerge and originate *from within ourselves*.

If we assume the former, then matter is something inherently and primordially real. However, matter is matter only to the extent that it is the object (of an intuition or act). If it were something *in itself*, it would also have to be something *for itself* which, however, it is not, because it can exist only as something that is intuited by a being outside itself.

However, if we assume it to be something *in itself*—although it is already contradictory to say this, let alone think it—we [still] could not even know what is *in itself*. To know this, we would have to be matter ourselves. In that case, however, if we were to have a necessary knowledge of this being, we would strictly be *ourselves* and not matter. Hence, for as long as we *presuppose* matter, thereby assuming that it *precedes* our cognition, we do not even understand what we are saying. Consequently, rather than continuing to grope blindly among absurd conceptions, we ought to inquire into that of which we have and *can* have original and true knowledge. *Originally*, however, we know only *ourselves*, and because there exist only *two* consistent systems, one that casts matter as the principle of the spirit and the other, which casts the spirit as the principle of matter, there remains for us, who wish to understand *ourselves*, only one position: not that the spirit begets matter, but *that matter is begotten by the spirit*; the latter claim does indeed allow us to make the transition into practical philosophy whereto we shall now proceed.

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<Postscript to the Formalists

*Facturusne operae pretium? sim!*¹⁷ This question we must indeed ask ourselves, gentlemen, if we are to open your eyes on the true import of your own philosophy. As you are contentious, however, I only ask that you consider the following proposition. In the event that you have had sufficient self-doubt as to read the preceding pages, you will have noticed that *your* philosophy is thoroughly comprehensible for us, [and] that we can explicate its *origins* for everyone with clarity. Now, you have displayed the commendable intention of refuting us; unfortunately, however, this means in your case that *the flesh* (the *hate* against the superior philosophy) is *willing* whereas the *spirit* (the ability to do it any harm) is *weak*. Why, then, do you not attempt for once to make this despised philosophy *comprehensible* as regards its *origins*? Why not search for the sources of your errors, and prove that *you* hold a standpoint superior to *ours*? Thus far you have merely *marvelled* at this philosophy; it was *incomprehensible* to you, a thing from another world, a ghost for which you

found no name in all your encyclopedias. Take courage and approach this entity more closely. Expose the horrible confusion to which it owes its existence. Once that has been accomplished, we shall be honored to be your students, and the *lectures*, which thus far you delievered only to an empty auditorium, shall find open ears. If you do not accept this proposal, we consider ourselves entitled, publicly and before the entire [scholarly] world, to deem you a lost cause.^{d>}

III

Preliminary Reminder

1,375 Due to some statements that have been made about the first sections of this treatise, I deem it necessary to remind my readers that it has never been my intention to copy what Kant had written nor [my claim] to know what Kant *had* properly intended with his philosophy but merely [to write] what, in *my view*, he *had* to have intended if his philosophy was to prove internally cohesive.

Let us now move on to *practical* philosophy. This present section shall merely effect the *transition* from theoretical to practical philosophy. Here I rely on my readers' general concurrence with Kant's ambition "to reach, some day, insight into the *entire* faculty of pure reason and to be able to deduce *everything* (theoretical and practical philosophy) from one principle, which is the inevitable necessity of human reason that can find complete satisfaction only in a thorough, systematic unity of its knowledge."¹⁸

^d[In a footnote to this survey in the first issue (regarding the introduction) the editors remark "that, if the author accused *philosophical authors* of dishonesty, they were not in agreement with this accusation." However, I actually took great care not to speak of a dishonesty that characterizes *philosophical authors*; on p. 347 mention is made only of a dishonesty of *several inquiries*. The difference is considerable. An *inquiry* can be very dishonest (may have stood under the influence of personal hatred, egotism, and self-interest) without the *author* being aware of it. I know that such should not be the case, and that, in some respect, it is less despicable if he is being unfair deliberately and consciously. The accusation that some *inquiries*, *criticisms* etc. are dishonest does not fit my character; such is claimed at several points in that same issue (e.g., concerning the fate of the Science of Knowledge).—Some authors acknowledge this themselves by stating explicitly or implicitly that they do not *wish* to hear, do not *wish* to understand, even though it is well known that this *not willing* (as with the fox in the fable) is merely the result of a *lack of ability* [*Nichtkönnen*].] [The fable alluded to is Aesop's "The Fox and the Grapes."]

**On the Relation between Theoretical and Practical Philosophy:
Transition from Nature to Freedom**

Theoretical philosophy, it is said, shall demonstrate the reality of human knowledge. However, for the time being all reality of our knowledge is rooted in the premise that there be something in knowledge that is not, in turn, immediately present through concepts or inferences ordinarily employed by the soul. For that which is thought by means of concepts or is produced by inferences we consciously posit as a product of our thinking and reflecting. All thinking and inferential reasoning, however, already presupposes a reality that we have not created by such thought or inference. In accepting this reality we are not aware of any freedom; we are constrained to admit that it exists with as much certainty as we assume our own existence to be true. We cannot be deprived of this reality without being deprived of ourselves.

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The question now arises how it should be possible for something external and strictly heterogeneous from the soul to cohere with our interiority in so immediate a manner, and how it could have merged so inextricably with our 'I' that neither one could be separated from the other without simultaneously uprooting what is common to both: the consciousness of ourselves. Nothing is more crucial than to think this question through in a rigorous manner and to ensure that this rigor not be compromised by our desire to arrive at some answer.

For all the failed attempts to answer this [question] share the mistake of attempting to explain conceptually what effectively precedes all concepts; they all betray the same incapacity of the spirit to transcend discursive thinking and to ascend to the immediacy that exists within itself.

I do not expect anyone to readily dispute that the reliability of all our knowledge is grounded in the *immediacy* of intuition. Profound philosophers have spoken about the knowledge of external things as a revelation that befalls us; it is not that [in saying this] they presume to have explained anything, but that they wish to intimate the general impossibility of communicating the connection between the object and the representation in discursive concepts; they also refer to our conviction of external things as a *belief*, either because the soul holds the most immediate commerce with that which it believes or to express concisely that this conviction is a blind certainty properly speaking, one that is grounded neither in inferences (from cause to effect) nor in any proof whatsoever. It is also hard to understand how any position that is based solely on inference should forge its passage into the soul and there establish itself as the dominant principle of activity and life, such as is implied by our faith in an external world.

As regards the question concerning the origin of the immediate and, therefore, most incontrovertible [quality] of our knowledge, only two basic answers are possible:¹⁹ either we argue that our intuition is merely *passive*, and

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that the necessity with which we represent external things for ourselves in this and no other manner results properly from this passivity of the intuition. The representation is nothing but the product of an external influence or, rather, the result of the relations that evolve between ourselves and the object.

This is not the place to enumerate everything that can be and has already been argued against this opinion. Let us only say this much:

To begin with, the entire hypothesis (for it is nothing more) cannot provide any explanation, for it demonstrates at best a certain impression on our receptivity, not that we have an intuition of a real *object*. Still, no one will deny that we do not merely have a *sensation* of the external object but that we have an *intuition* of it. According to the [former] hypothesis, everything would remain merely an impression; for to argue that only the impression be referred to the exterior object (as its cause) and that the representation of the latter originate as a result [of this referral] is to ignore the fact that in intuition we are not conscious of any activity, any going beyond ourselves, any opposing and relating; furthermore it is to ignore that the certainty of the presence of an *object* (which surely must be something different from the impression) cannot be grounded in such an uncertain syllogism. In short, intuition would have to be thought of as a *free activity*, to say the least, even though it be effected by an [external] impression.

At the same time, however, it is obvious that the cause is never *simultaneous* with its effect. Between the two there elapses time. Hence, if the former presupposition is correct, there must be a time during which the thing in itself affects us, and another [time] during which we become conscious of this effect. The first one lies completely outside ourselves, whereas the second one is within ourselves. Hence, we would be obliged to postulate two completely distinct temporal sequences that evolve separately and independent of one another, which is inconsistent.

1,378 Furthermore, it is certain that the effect is not identical with its cause. However, one can easily call on the consciousness of each individual [and ask] whether in the state of intuition there did not exist an absolute identity of the object and the representation, whether the individual did not act as though the object itself was present in the intuition, and whether he was not conscious of the distinction between the two only as a *free activity*. This belief in an original identity of the object and the representation is the *root* of our theoretical and practical understanding. Conversely, the history [of philosophy] shows all skepticism to develop its principal argument out of the notion that there has to be an original object *outside ourselves*; the effect of this would be what we call representation. For [whether] the soul relates to the object with complete passivity or with partial activity, it remains certain that the impression must already differ from the object, and that it must already be modified by the receptivity of the soul. Hence, the object that affects us must be completely different from the one of which we have an intuition.

However, in spite of everything, the sound understanding remains unshaken in its belief that the represented object be simultaneously the object in itself. And as soon as he enters the real life, the formal philosopher [*Schulphilosoph*] obliterates the entire difference between appearances and things in themselves.⁶

Finally, there obtains a continuity between cause and effect not only with regard to time but also according to space. Neither one of these, however, can be thought to apply [to the relation] between the object and the representation. For what should be the common medium wherein the spirit and the object coincide in the same manner as two entities in space? Any explanation that one may provide in this matter is *transcendent* in its origin, that is, it involves a leap from this world into another one to explain a phenomenon that is possible only in one of these [worlds], unless we were to abandon any distinction between spirit and matter. Are we, then, to take refuge in the *simulacra* of the ancients, or in the *formae intentionales* of the Aristotelians, which enter our soul by means of the senses as through open windows?²⁰ Or is the soul like a convex mirror that reflects disfigured images as regular figures? Yet for whom? Only for an eye outside itself. We should confess not to know anything about the origins of representation rather than insist on a hypothesis that leads to the most inconsistent analogies. I fear that I have exhausted my readers already, and hence I shall proceed to the completely opposed theory. Put briefly, it runs as follows:

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There is, in our knowledge, nothing immediate (and hence nothing certain), unless the representation is simultaneously both, the original and the copy, and unless our knowledge is original and [exists] by virtue of a *simultaneous* ideality and reality. The object is nothing but our own proper [*selbsteigne*] synthesis, and the spirit does not intuit anything in it but its own product. The intuition is *completely active and precisely therefore productive and immediate*.

The question is how such an immediate and absolutely active intuition can be thought. The following conclusions are plain enough:

We may analyze into infinity, dissect mechanically or chemically what matter, that is, the object of an external intuition, is, and still we will never get beyond the *surface* of entities. That which alone is indestructible about matter is the *force* that inhabits it, and that manifests itself to our sensation as

⁶The transcendental idealism, Kant notes, is an empirical realism, i.e., it claims that the represented object be simultaneously also the real one. By contrast, the transcendental realism is an empirical realism, i.e., it must claim that the real object be altogether different from that which we represent. The common understanding, however, sides completely *with* the empirical realism and employs against the empirical idealism almost nothing but the light armor of wit and satire, which are indeed the most adequate [means] to employ against dogmatics.

1,380 something impenetrable. Such a force, however, is directed only outward, merely counteracting an impulse from the outside, and as such it does not *return into itself*. Only a force returning into itself creates an *interiority* for itself. Hence, matter does not possess any inwardness. Yet the representing being has the intuition of an *inner world*. This is possible only through an activity *that establishes its sphere for itself* or, in other words, [by means of a force] that returns into itself. Yet no activity returns into itself that, for the same reason and simultaneously, would not also direct itself *outward*. There is no sphere without limitation, yet likewise [there is] no limitation without a space that is being limited.

Hence, that quality which renders the soul capable of an immediate cognition (i.e., of an intuition of itself) is the *duplicity of its inward and outward tendency*.

It is with the interpenetration, as it were, of these two tendencies in the [soul] that there originates a product, *a real construction of the soul itself*. This product exists within the [soul], and it does not differ from, but is immediately present within, the former; and ultimately it is here that we properly find everything immediate, which is to say, certain about our knowledge.

Originally, then, all intuition is merely of an inward quality. This follows necessarily from what we know and are capable of knowing about the nature of the soul. If we are asked what the essence of the spirit consists of, we shall answer: its tendency to have an intuition of itself. Our explanations cannot reach beyond this activity. Already here we can point to the synthesis of the Ideal and the Real in our knowledge; through it alone the spirit comes to know itself, and as regards knowledge, the spirit has but one limitation, namely, *itself*.

Yet the question arises how the *inner* sense may become an *outer* [sense]. Here the answer is as follows:

In its tendency toward self-inspection the spirit limits itself. However, this tendency is *infinite* and reproduces itself into infinity. (Only in this infinite reproduction of itself does the spirit attain continuity. It will soon become apparent that without this premise the entire system of our spirit would defy all explanations.) The spirit, then, has a necessary tendency to inspect itself in its conflicting activities. This it cannot do without presenting them in a common product, that is, without rendering them *permanent*. Hence, from the perspective of consciousness, these activities appear *static*, as *forces* that are not active *themselves* but merely *counteract* an external impulse. Matter is nothing other than the spirit *inspected in the equilibrium of its activities*.

1,381 This common product is necessarily a *finite* one. Only in the act of production does the spirit become aware of its *finitude*. Because it is completely free in producing, the reason for its restricted production cannot lie in its *current* activity. In *this* activity, it does not limit *itself* [but] *finds* or, which is the same, *feels* itself to be limited.

Hence, that [aspect] of the object which is the product of the spirit's free activity appears for the spirit as the *sphere*, whereas what limits the spirit in every productive act appears as the *boundary* of the object.

This limitation of the production is also the *limitation of the inner and outer sense*. The spirit intuits the sphere and the boundaries of its production as a *magnitude in space* and as a *magnitude in time*, respectively. The latter is discovered by the spirit within *itself* or, in other words, it is *felt*. Yet the former it intuits as something *external to itself*, as the sphere of its free and originally unlimited activity.

Here, then, where space and time become distinct as different forms of intuition, the outer and inner sense also separate, with the *outer sense* thus far being nothing but the *limited inner* [sense].

What is *intuited* has magnitude in *space*, whereas what is *felt* has magnitude in *time*. That which is only a magnitude in time we call *quality*. No one ever believed that color, taste, smell were something special. Hence, they have been understood for a long time as *qualitates secundariae*, that is, as qualities that are exclusively grounded in our modes of receptivity. Thus the quality of objects is merely that which was originally felt, that is, the limitation of a free production. Only by virtue of its *quality* does any given object become something determinate. And because no knowledge is *real* except for the extent to which it is the knowledge of a *determined* object, the entire belief in a reality outside ourselves ultimately adheres to the [notion of] an *original sensation* as its principal and most fundamental cause.

In the act of intuition, the spirit *discovers* itself as limited. Hence, the limit of its production appears for the spirit as *random* (as a mere accident of its activity), whereas the sphere of the production, in which the spirit intuits nothing but its own mode of activity, appears as the *essential* and as the necessary (substantial) aspect of its activity.

In intuition the spirit *ends* the original conflict between opposing activities by exhibiting them in a common product. The spirit *reposes* in intuition, so to speak, while sensation continues to bind it to the object.

If its original activity did not involve a tendency toward the *infinite*, and if it did not reproduce itself into infinity, the spirit would never emerge from this first intuition but would cling inflexibly to the original sensation, and there would prevail an eternal stasis without progression from representation to representation, devoid of any wealth or plentitude of external intuition. Hence, we claim that, by virtue of this original activity, the spirit continually seeks to fill the infinite, while the opposed activity enables it to inspect itself in this striving. That is, we will conceive of the soul as an activity that continually strives to extract something finite from the infinite. It is as though the soul comprised an infinity that it is constrained to present outside itself. This cannot be explained any further, except by referring [again] to the constant striving of the spirit to become *finite* for itself; that is, to become conscious of itself.

All acts of the spirit thus aim at *presenting the infinite within the finite*. The goal of all these acts is self-consciousness, and their history is none other than the *history of self-consciousness*.

Every act of the soul is also a determinate *stage of the soul*. Hence, the history of the human spirit will prove none other than the history of the different *stages* in passing through which the spirit progressively attains an intuition of itself, [which is] *pure self-consciousness*.

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Yet there exists no stage of the soul, nor any activity, of which the soul itself did not have an *intuition*. For its striving for self-inspection is infinite, and only through the infinity of this striving does it reproduce itself into infinity.

However, what the soul intuits is always its *own, progressive nature*. Yet this nature is nothing but this frequently manifest conflict that it exhibits in particular objects. Thus, through its own products—imperceptible to the common eye, [yet] clear and distinct to that of the philosopher—the soul marks the path on which it gradually reaches self-consciousness. The external world lies unfolded [*aufgeschlagen*] for us, so that we may rediscover within it the history of our spirit.

Hence, philosophy cannot rest until it has accompanied the spirit to the goal of all its striving, to self-consciousness. We shall follow it from representation to representation, from product to product, up to the point where for the first time it rends itself in its pure activity and subsequently will form an intuition of *itself* only in its absolute activity.

This discovery is of great importance for our present objectives. We are in search of the transition from theoretical to practical philosophy. The principle of *all* philosophy is self-consciousness. It delineates the entire sphere of the spirit, because [the spirit] strives for self-consciousness in all its activities. Hence, in the succession of these activities, we are sure to find an activity where the theoretical and the practical domains of philosophy border on, and cohere with, one another.

Because this one activity encompasses the two worlds into which our philosophy has been divided, we can know in advance that it will be the supreme activity of the human spirit. This much said, let us follow the path on which we set out.

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We left the spirit at the stage of intuition and sensation. Unless its activity is to be extinguished with the first intuition, it will have to reproduce itself once again. Hence, the soul will at first exhibit a striving to detach itself from the present impression. It is through this striving that *time originates* for the [soul] as the extension (though but in one direction) of a magnitude; the present object passes into a moment of the past, for which reason we *discover* it in the initial consciousness as something accidental that exists without our influence. Our entire existence, however, depends on our activity. This activ-

ity, in turn, finds its expression in constant productivity. Hence, there exists within us a *necessary* striving to sustain the continuity of the representations, that is, an *eternal producing*. In disengaging itself from the present, the soul inevitably aims at something in the future. Consequently, there inheres a succession in our representations that supports our very existence. No representation is merely *static* within the soul because it is nothing other than an activity of the soul; rather it is continuous and, as it were, in flux. Thus every representation, that is, every necessary activity of the soul, produces spontaneously [*von selbst*] a new one. It is as though the soul were striving at each single moment to present something infinite; because it is not capable of this, it necessarily strives beyond each presence to present the infinite at least as a *succession in time*. The soul, then, continually produces the representation of a universe, even though it is not capable of presenting the latter at any single moment. This it would not do, if it did not have a continuous feeling of itself as being restricted and, in relation with this [feeling], did not express a necessary striving against it. Precisely for this reason, however, the [soul] is initially nothing but a flux of representations. For it subsists only in the continuous transition from cause to effect, and the spirit no longer feels restricted by a discrete object but, rather, by a necessary sequence of successive appearances.

Now [the fact] that an effect follows every cause, and that every effect becomes once again a cause, hence, that the succession of our representations is *endless* and that the present moment is the reliable reference for the future (*praesens gravidum futuro*), all this reveals an original activity of the soul that strives for nothing so much as for *preserving itself*;²¹ from this it follows that the soul contains *within itself* its continuity and the certainty of its existence, [and] hence, that it is an irrepressible and infinitely regenerative activity.

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With the spirit striving to disengage itself from the present, the present becomes, in and through this activity, a *past*. The past, meanwhile, attains presence only in the *concept*. Yet the soul, whose productive activity is infinite, ceaselessly strives for *reality*, and thus it involves a continuous progression from the *concept to the intuition*, from the intuition to the concept, from the past to the present, and from the present to the future. As the soul advances from one representation to the next, time (initially a mere point) gains extension, whereas space (initially unbounded) is actively limited. Such an activity that simultaneously *limits space* and *extends time* appears externally as *movement*. Movement (as a composite of time and space), then, is that which corresponds externally to the inner succession of the representations, and because the inner sense becomes necessarily an *external* one, the soul will necessarily conceive of the succession of its representations outside itself as a *movement*. The movement, however, is necessarily *determined*, that is, the moving entity passes through a determined space. Yet space is determined exclusively by time. (Time is the most primordial measure of space). The most primordial schema of movement is thus a *straight line*, that is, a *point in flux*.

The mere succession of the representations, considered externally, provides the concept of *mechanical movement*.

1,386 However, the soul is to have not only an intuition of this succession but also an intuition of *itself* within this succession, and (because it has only an intuition of its activity) it is to form an intuition of *itself* as *active* in this succession. Yet once again it is active in this succession only to the extent that it produces and, by virtue of this infinite producing, sustains the succession of the representations. Hence, it shall have an intuition of itself in this *producing*, [that is,] in its *spontaneous transition from cause to effect*. Yet it does not have any intuition of itself without presenting itself in an object. Thus it will have an intuition of itself as an object endowed with productive powers.

To the extent that it *produces its own* representations [the soul] is *alternately* its own *cause and effect*. Hence, it will have an intuition of itself as an object that is *alternately its own cause and effect* or, which is the same, as *organic nature* [*sich selbst organisierende Natur*].

Though this is not the place for a more thoroughgoing development of the concept of organization, we must take note of the following:

If the human spirit is of an *organic* nature, nothing will enter into it *mechanically from the outside*; whatever is in it, [the spirit] has configured [*sich angebildet*] to itself *from the inside out* in accordance with an inner principle. Everything within it, then, strives toward the system, that is, toward absolute purposiveness.

Yet whatever is absolutely purposive is *in itself complete and perfected*. It contains within itself *the origin and the final purpose* of its existence. Precisely this is the primordial quality of the spirit. Inherently destined to finitude, it constructs itself, produces itself into infinity, and thus constitutes both beginning and end of its own existence.

In purposiveness, form and matter, concept and intuition interpenetrate. Precisely this is the character of the spirit wherein the Ideal and the Real are absolutely united. Hence, there is something *symbolic* in every organism, and every plant is, so to speak, *an arabesque delineation of the soul*.

1,387 Because our spirit is characterized by an infinite striving to organize itself, a universal tendency toward organization ought to reveal itself in the external world as well. Such is indeed the case. The system of the world is a kind of organization that has developed from a common center. Already the forces of chemical matter transcend the merely mechanical. Even raw matter, which evolves from a common medium, is evenly configured. Nature's universal formative drive finally disseminates into an infinity that remains inexhaustible, even to the discerning eye. The steady and firm tendency of nature toward organization reveals clearly enough an energetic drive that, struggling with raw material as it were, now submits, now breaks through it in freer or, alternatively, in more limited forms. It is the universal *spirit* of nature that gradually configures raw matter to itself. Starting with the texture of moss,

which barely reveals any trace of organization, and up to the ennobled figure [Gestalt] that seems to have discarded the material fetters, there prevails one drive, striving to express into infinity one archetype [Urbild], the pure form of our spirit.²²

No organization is conceivable without a *productive force*. I would like to know how such a force enters into matter if we were to think of the latter as a *thing in itself*. We need no longer be fainthearted in our claims; there simply cannot be any doubt about what *unfolds* daily before our eyes. A productive force inheres in all external things. Such a force, however, can be only the force of a *spirit*. Hence, those things cannot be *things in themselves*—cannot be real by virtue of themselves. They can be only *creations* [or] *production of a spirit*.

The gradual succession of organisms and the transition from an inanimate to an animate nature clearly reveals a productive force that only *gradually* develops toward complete freedom. The spirit is to intuit *itself* in the succession of its representations. This it cannot do without *fixating* that succession, that is, representing it in *stasis*. Hence, everything organic is virtually removed from the sequence of causes and effects. Each organism constitutes a *unified world* (according to Leibniz a *confused* representation of the world).²³ It is the eternal archetype that finds its expression in any given plant. For, however far we may trace it, we will discover that [the plant] only originates out of itself and returns into itself. Only the material in which the [archetype] finds its expression pays the price of ephemerality, whereas the *form* of the organization (its very concept) remains indestructible.

However, when fixating the succession of the representations, the spirit has an intuition of itself with regard to its productive faculty, to be sure, though not in its productive *activity*. Now what corresponds externally to the inner succession of the representations is [called] movement. Yet this very succession of the representations in which the spirit is supposed to have an intuition of itself as *active* is sustained by a *principle of inner activity*. Hence, if the [spirit] is to have an intuition of itself as active in the succession of its representations, it will have to inspect itself as an *object* that contains an *inner principle of movement* within itself. Such is what we properly call a *living being*.

Hence, *life* necessarily exists in nature. Just as there exists a gradated chain of organization, there also exists a gradated chain of life. Only gradually does the spirit approximate its own nature. It is necessary that the [spirit] appear for itself in an *external* form, namely, as *organized, animated matter*. For only *life* constitutes the visible analogue of the spirit. Where the spirit subsists only in the continuity of its representations, life, too, is sustained only by the continuity of its inner movements. If there did not exist within us an even continuity between discrete representations, the spirit's activity would cease; if the [animated] body did not exhibit a perpetual interaction among its various functions, by a perpetual reproduction of one by the other, and by a

perpetual alternation of an imbalanced and regained equilibrium of its forces, life would cease.^f Everything about man has the character of freedom. Fundamentally, man is a being that inanimate nature has released from its guardianship and thereby entrusted to the fortunes of his own (internally conflicting) forces. His fundamental continuity is one of a *danger* [*Gefahr*], forever recurring and forever to be mastered anew, a danger that man seeks by his own impulse and from which he saves himself anew.

The spirit, however, is to intuit not animated matter as such but rather *itself* within the animated matter. And yet the spirit itself is distinguished only by its *inwardness*, [that is,] by the activity that inheres in its representations. Hence, at any given moment this body must be the faithful copy of its inner condition. Every representation of the spirit will *quasi* paint itself in the body (the external object is painted in the eye by virtue of light, [and] movement are formed by the ear through the medium of air, etc.); the body must imitate and portray as it were every inward movement. Hence, man is the only being to have a physiognomy.²⁵ The closer to man a given animal is, the more it approximates physiognomy, etc.^g

If, however, the body is the faithful copy of the soul, then both will coincide in one intuition; the spirit is lost in matter [and] no differentiation between the two is possible. Yet the spirit intuits only *itself* in its product; that is, it is to *distinguish itself* from its *product*. We must ask how this can be accomplished.

^fHe who is familiar with the most recent inquiries into the origin and principle of animal life can hardly be surprised to learn that thus far nothing definitive has been established about these matters, and that a completely new inquiry has to be conceived in this regard. It is the dominant concept of a "vital force" [*Lebenskraft*], a veritable *qualitas occulta*, that impedes the progress of these inquiries most.²⁴ The concept of *life* established previously is readily applicable to the phenomena of life. If, for example, it is confirmed that the two electrical substances derive from air, it becomes readily apparent that, according to the different mode of *how* and according to the different *quality* of the entities *by means of which* this separation is effected, there can also originate *different* positive and negative forms of matter (following the analogy of electrical currents), which (probably created through respiration) can sustain *life* by virtue of their perpetual conflict.

^gThe crude realism has the first and most primitive experiences on its side. We have sight only because light affects our eyes, etc. Yet what is light itself? Once again an object! And what is the eye other than the *mirror* of things? The mirror, however, does not possess sight of *itself*, it reflects, yet for an eye outside itself. That the [human] body be the mirror of the universe is yet to be deduced from within the system of philosophy, and idealism itself eventually confirms the truth of the proposition that all representations in us originate due to the influence of external objects. To which world, then, does the [living] body belong? Does it not belong to the objective world, that is, to the system of our necessary representations?

In its body, the spirit *unites* and *gathers*, as it were, the elements of the world. It thereby demarcates the limits of its production, by inspecting the entire sphere of all its potential acts in a microscopic world that it penetrates and whose movements it governs with its representations. However, that this body is *its own* body and that it is governed by *its own* representations, this it can know only by becoming conscious of the representation as such, that is, independent of the corresponding dynamics in the body. The question arises how the spirit can become conscious of a representation as such.

1,390

We have traced the spirit through the entire hierarchy of its productions, and it was to be explained how it could *become immediately conscious of itself* and how it could have an immediate intuition of itself. As *pure activity*, the [spirit] can have an intuition of itself only in its activity. To have such an intuition [the spirit] must *act*. This primordial activity is necessarily an act directed *onto itself*, for thus far nothing is *for* the spirit besides its self. Through this act directed onto itself, there originates for the spirit a world of products. Yet it is to inspect not these products but *itself* within these products. This is not possible unless [the spirit] separates the *activity* whereby the product originates for the spirit, from the product as such or, which is the same, if in the representation it discriminates between its *activity* and the *object* of the representation. It remains to be seen how this might be effected.

If all our knowledge remained strictly *empirical*, we could never transcend the stage of mere intuition. *Primordially*, however, our knowledge is strictly empirical. That we may distinguish the *object* of intuition from *the latter* [and] the product from the *activity* whereby it originates implies, therefore, a *subsequent* activity of the spirit.

Without this [activity] we would have an intuition of all objects in *space*, to be sure, yet space itself [we would intuit] only *within ourselves*. For because consciousness is something absolutely inward that admits of no immediate contact between itself and external things, we feel constrained to posit that, *primordially*, we possess neither an intuition of things *outside ourselves* nor, as some have taught, in *God*, but that we intuit them exclusively *within ourselves*. This being the case, it would seem impossible to discriminate between an inner and an outer world. The outward sense, then, will completely collapse into the inner one. And because an inwardness can be distinguished only in opposition to an outer [sphere], this inner world, too, will inevitably perish along with the outer one. The inner world can be receptive only to a *free* activity that returns into itself. However, if our activity were not to transcend its mere [occurrence], it could not freely return into itself either; it would remain completely encapsulated, in a maze so to speak.

1,391

This notion can be illustrated by the state that the soul assumes during *sleep*. Because the [soul] is continuously active, we cannot believe that it would cease to be active in this state, that is, that it would cease to produce

representations. Yet because the soul is abandoned by the body and therefore lacks all contact with outer space, the soul, in this state, intuits everything only *within itself*; it neither attains the level of the concept nor that of judgment and, precisely for that reason, no remembering of previous representations occurs; in short, the soul appears to sleep simultaneously with the body.

In its intermediate state between sleep and waking, the soul's natural activity is disrupted by the half-waking imagination; it is here that *dreaming* originates, a [stage] at which the soul intuits everything with consciousness, albeit in the greatest confusion. In this state, the objects are suspended as it were in an *intermediate world*, and the soul, though frequently *judging* that it is dreaming, remains nevertheless incapable of correcting its representations because it is unable to detach itself completely from its object.

1,392 Hence the activity of the spirit cannot possibly terminate in intuition, for otherwise we could not even become conscious of this intuition. The question is merely whether there exists in our inner experience a product of an activity that reaches beyond intuition.

It must be conceded (in consequence of the preceding), that in the state of intuition, the representation and the object are the same. Even so, we discriminate between the two by speaking of them as discrete entities. Yet because they are *necessarily* united within us, they cannot be separated in a *real* but only in an *ideal* [manner], [that is,] in our *thinking*. What, then, renders such thinking possible?

From this it follows—to remind ourselves only in passing—that *thought* cannot possibly be our primordial activity, because it comes after intuition and because its explanation mandates a yet higher principle from which it springs (like Minerva from Jupiter's forehead).²⁶ Without the *primordial energy* of the spirit there can be no *freedom of thought*, without freedom of thought we cannot discriminate between object and representation, and without that discrimination we have neither consciousness nor philosophy, for the latter is grounded in that distinction.

There exists, within us, a capacity to repeat *freely* the activity of the spirit in intuition and to discriminate between its necessary and its contingent [aspects]. Without this distinction all knowledge would be strictly *empirical*. Hence it is the *faculty of concepts* a priori that allows us to transcend the stage of blind intuition. These concepts, however, are nothing but the spirit's primordial *modes of intuition*. As concepts they exist only *to the extent* that we comprehend, that is, that we form *abstractions*. In short, they are not innate, because that which is innate exists without our influence. The soul cannot be a particular thing into which certain ideas are implanted afterward; for if we abstract from its ideas, the [soul] itself is nothing. Not its ideas are innate to it, but the [soul] itself is innate *unto itself*. He who remains incapable of seizing the spirit in its *process*, in its activity, and who knows of merely what he has abstracted from [the spirit], will deem these primordial activities of the spirit,

through which alone it attains consciousness, merely *formal* qualities that are simply the result of an external check; and [he will consider] the spirit itself something undifferentiated and static, [that is,] merely a primordial *faculty* to act. Yet such a passive faculty of the spirit is a genuine absurdity devoid of any reality other than in the abstractions of the philosophers.

1,393

[To repeat:] The spirit is to become conscious of itself in its pure activity. The concept, meanwhile, is but intuition imitated [*nachgeahmte*]. Hence the concept will coincide with the intuition in a single consciousness. Hence, too, the concept alone will not suffice to explain the pure self-consciousness of the spirit.

The animal, too, though enclosed in a permanent stupor, is not devoid of conceptuality and intuition. However, what the animal (and the human being approximating it) lacks is the *freely differentiating and relating consciousness* [or], quite simply, *judgment*, which is the exclusive domain of rational beings. Only judgment unites these two activities, [namely,] the free differentiation between the intuition and the concept and the free reciprocal interaction of one with the other. It is only in judgment that the product of the intuition becomes the *object* that we *determine*. And only with judgment does the representation *become detached* from the soul and thus enters, as an *object*, a sphere external to the [soul].

Still, judgment in itself is nothing primordial. *First*, we must ask by what means it becomes possible for the spirit to *differentiate* between object and representation. Nature has solved this problem by means of an art hidden in the depth of the human soul.²⁷ To avoid the conflation of both, concept and object, in one consciousness, the imagination extends the concept beyond the limits of the particular in such a manner that the concept hovers in between the universal and the particular. In creating the *rule* according to which the object originates in sensuous contours [*sinnlich verzeichnet*], the [imagination] is thus able to unite, by means of a peculiar schematism, the particularity and universality in the same product. *Second*, [we must ask] how it is possible that both, object and representation, can be referred to one another. The productive imagination projects a *figure* [*Bild*] through which the concept is determined and delimited. Only with the convergence of the schema and the figure does there emerge the consciousness of an *individual* object.

1,394

It is an inevitable plight of philosophy that it must break down into individual moments and acts what, in the human spirit itself, is but one act and one moment. Consequently, [philosophy] becomes unintelligible to all those incapable of uniting through the transcendental imagination that which had been severed of necessity. Thus it is manifest that the soul can project no schema of an object without having before itself a figure of the latter that will guide its production; nor can it produce [such] a figure without simultaneously proceeding in accordance with the sensible contour of a rule (a schema).

It is apparent, then, that this succession of acts—all of which taken together condition [our] consciousness—is not a *sequence*, that is, that one does not presuppose and produce the other, but that all of them together do so in reciprocity. It is an alternation of acts, each of which always returns into itself. The proper center, then, lies in the *judgment* whence all theoretical acts proceed and whereto they return.

This, then, is the magical circle that we are to overcome. Yet every act that relates to an object returns to this circle. It is not possible to leave it except through an act that does no longer have an object other than the *spirit itself*. Evidently, then, the spirit cannot become conscious of its acts as such except by striving beyond all objectness. Beyond the latter, however, the spirit will find nothing but itself.

Yet that act through which the spirit rends itself away from the object cannot be explained any better than as a *self-determination* of the spirit. The spirit determines *itself* to do this, and in so determining itself it actually accomplishes just that.

1,395 It is a *thrust* [*Schwung*] that the spirit affords itself beyond all finitude.²⁸ It annihilates, as it were, all finitude for itself, and only in this *absolute positivity* does it have an intuition of *itself*.

This self-determination of the spirit is called the *will* [*Wollen*].²⁹ The spirit wills, and it is *free*. That it *wills* cannot be grounded any further. For precisely because this act occurs unconditionally [*schlechthin*] it constitutes *will*.

By annihilating through the act all objectness for itself, the spirit has nothing left for itself but the *pure form of its will*, [which is] henceforth the eternal law of its activity.

The question has been how the spirit could become immediately conscious of its activity, and we have answered: by rending itself away from the object, which, in turn, cannot happen without an *absolute act* of the spirit. Thus, to *act absolutely*, then, is to *will*. Hence the spirit becomes immediately conscious of its activity only as a *will*, and the act of *will* is generally the *supreme condition of self-consciousness*.

* * *

This, then, is the activity that we had already sought from the very outset, the activity that unites theoretical and practical philosophy.

No further ground can be adduced for this activity, for the spirit exists only because it *wills*, and it knows itself only by *determining itself*. We cannot move beyond this activity, and thus it is the legitimate *principle* of our philosophy.

The spirit is a *primordial will*. Hence this will must be as infinite as the [spirit] *itself*. In this act of *will*, however, there already inheres the *dualism* of the principles that pervades all our knowledge, and already in this act are the two worlds *separated* between which our knowledge is divided.

The spirit primordially determines itself, and thus it is by nature simultaneously active and passive. It ends the primordial conflict of activity and passivity in its intuition of an objective world. However, the spirit itself continues only through this conflict (of activity and passivity). Hence, if the spirit was unable to reinstate this primordial conflict, all its activity along with this very conflict would terminate in intuition. However, the spirit can reproduce this conflict only by rending itself away from the product of the intuition, and this again it cannot do without determining *itself* accordingly; that is, without becoming once again active and passive.

1,396

The spirit *wills*. Yet *volition* manifests itself only in opposition to reality. Only because the spirit feels imprisoned by *reality* does it long for the *ideal*. Reality, then, is as necessary and as eternal as the ideal, and the spirit is fettered by objects of its own volition.

Conversely, without the freedom of the will there prevails, within ourselves, only a *blind representational* [activity] without any consciousness of *ourselves* in this, our [activity].

And because the entire objective world is nothing real *in itself*, it is impossible to understand how it could *continue* if not through the perpetual *volition* of the spirit. It is only the freedom of our volition that supports the entire system of our representations, and the world itself consists only of this expansion and contraction of the spirit.^h

Because *time* generally originates only through the pure volition and activity of the spirit, we can also comprehend the *simultaneity* of all things in the world. The idea of a universe already inheres (undeveloped) in the most primordial act of the spirit; it is developed and presented only through an infinite series of acts. Only this one act is synthetic in its very nature whereas all others are merely analytical in *relation to it*.

* * *

With reference to Kant the question has often been raised as to how [his] theoretical and practical philosophy relate to one another; indeed, doubts have been expressed as to whether, in *his* system, they cohere at all. If, however, one had concentrated on the idea of *autonomy*, which Kant himself posited as the principle of his practical philosophy, it would have become readily apparent that in his system this idea constitutes the axis around which both theoretical and practical philosophy revolve, and that this concept already lends the proper expression to the primordial synthesis of theoretical and practical philosophy. I hope to make this yet more evident.

1,397

Practical philosophy in its entirety postulates *transcendental freedom* as a principle; meanwhile, the *Critique of Practical Reason* contends that this [prin-

^hIn his conversation with *Jacobi*, *Lessing* had ascribed this image of a perpetual creation to *Leibniz*.³⁰

ciple] would be altogether inconceivable if the laws of nature, and in particular the law of causality, were laws of *things in themselves* rather than of mere *appearances*.³¹ Already, then, Kant's system exhibits a necessary relation of theoretical and practical philosophy.

Furthermore, Kant himself claims that, on the one hand, we can and must explain the activities of man psychologically, as necessary and in accordance with the laws of cause and effect; and yet, [he notes,] to do so does not oblige us to abandon the idea of *freedom*, and along with it all notions of guilt and merit.³² Why not? *Who* actually does the explaining here? I myself. And for *whom* is an explanation being given? Once again, for myself. What, then, is this 'I' for whom its acts, although they are *free*, appear as the effects in a necessary chain of cause and effect? Evidently [it is] a being that *spontaneously* affords its acts an outer sphere, that *appears for itself*, [and that] *becomes empirical for and through itself*—a principle that cannot belong to appearance *itself* or fall under the law of appearances because everything else appears *for* it. Clearly, then, by postulating that free acts appear for us (empirically) Kant presupposes a higher principle in which reality and possibility, necessity and freedom, the Real and the Ideal are primordially united (as by a prestabilized harmony).

1,398 For if the human spirit is primordially autonomous, it is a being that not only contains within itself the *ground* but also the *limit* of its own being and its reality, and whose limits consequently cannot be determined by anything external; [in short, it is] a self-contained and intrinsically complete totality <as it were a monogram of freedom constructed out of the infinite and the finite>. If, then, such a being is to have an intuition of an *external* world, it must be in accordance with its nature that what is merely the *inner* activity of the spirit will appear for it externally, namely, of necessity and under necessary laws. Among the *absolutely inward* acts rank primarily those whereby we become conscious of ourselves as moral beings. The latter we cannot do without *distinguishing* these acts from ourselves, that is, intuiting them *outside* ourselves.

Moreover, if this self-contained being shall influence an outer world, the latter must itself fall within the range of this [being's] original activity, and the sensible cannot differ from the supersensible in *kind* but only with respect to its *limitations*.

If, conversely, the external world (as Kant proves in his theoretical philosophy) is on the order of mere appearance, it is incomprehensible how an infinite manifold of external things and a system of lawfulness and purposiveness could spring from the imaginative powers of a morally vacuous and dead being, lacking all purpose and self-determination.¹

¹Also, no one will comprehend *this* idealism unless he realizes that the primordially practical within ourselves is the sole source of all reality for us.

It follows that Kant's theoretical and practical philosophy would be equally unfounded and incomprehensible if they did not both proceed from the same principle, that of the primordial autonomy of the human spirit.

* * *

Even if we were to separate all material concerns from the present inquiry, and if we were to consider only the method to be followed, we would still reach the same conclusions.

1,399

Theoretical philosophy mandates that the origins of representation be explained. Yet where did this need to explain originate for it, and does not the act of this explanation itself already presuppose that we have become independent of our representations, that is, that we have become *practical*? Hence theoretical philosophy already presupposes practical philosophy in its very first principles. Conversely, practical philosophy also presupposes a theoretical [counterpart]. Most readers would grant me the proof for this, even if it had not already been presented earlier. Hence a *unilateral solution* of the two questions, how a theoretical and a practical philosophy should be possible, cannot be found, and we must arrive (inasmuch as the problem can be solved at all) at a *common* solution.

Precisely for this reason, this [solution] can be found neither in theoretical nor in practical philosophy; for they are mutually exclusive; hence it [can be found] either not at all or only in a *higher* philosophy which, precisely because it *encompasses* both, must proceed from an *absolute state* of the human spirit in which it is neither theoretical nor practical, yet which must offer a common passage both into the realm of the theoretical and the practical.

However, the transition from an indeterminate *absolute* state into a determinate one cannot be effected by an *external* determination, for in the former state the spirit is immune to any external cause. If, then, it is to be *determined* (and this we must presuppose), it can be *determined only by itself*. This *self-determination* of the spirit, then, must be the common inroad into theoretical and practical philosophy, and thus we find ourselves back at the very point of our original departure.

* * *

It is a fundamental mistake to attempt a theoretical grounding of theoretical philosophy. As long as we are merely concerned with setting up a philosophical *edifice* (as was evidently Kant's purpose), we may content ourselves with such a foundation, just as we are satisfied when the house we are building stands on firm ground. Yet when speaking of a *system*, we must ask on what the ground itself rests, and on what that second ground [rests], and so forth ad infinitum.

1,400

System we call only such a whole as *supports itself*, something that [is] contained within itself [and] presupposes no external ground for its move-

ments and its coherence. Thus, once the universal equilibrium of forces had been discovered, the world edifice became a *cosmological system*.³³ To become a system, then, philosophy must discover a universal equilibrium of the spiritual forces. Yet just as the forces that constitute the universe cannot be deduced from matter (for matter already presupposes them and must be deduced from them), our system of knowledge cannot be deduced *from* our knowledge but presupposes a principle transcendent to our knowledge and cognition. Now that which alone surpasses all our cognition is our faculty of transcendental freedom or the will. For as the *limit* of all our knowledge and activity, it alone is by necessity *incomprehensible, indissoluble*—according to its nature it is the most *unfounded* and the most indemonstrable—[and] precisely therefore the most immediate and most evident [element] in our knowledge.

The entire revolution that philosophy undergoes in consequence of having discovered this principle is due to that unique and fortuitous insight, namely, to locate the standpoint from which to examine the world not within the world itself but outside of it. It is the old postulate of Archimedes (applied to philosophy) that is thus being fulfilled. To apply the lever at some fixed point within the world itself and thereby to try to move it out of its position is futile. At most it enables us to move individual things. Archimedes postulates a firm standpoint *outside* the world; to discover this standpoint in a *theoretical* manner (i.e., in the world itself) is contradictory.

1,401 However, if there exists within us a *pure consciousness* that, independent of external things [and] not dominated by any external power, *supports* and *activates* itself, then this is properly “what Archimedes was in need of yet did not find: a firm standpoint where reason can apply its lever, not to the present or some future world but strictly to the *inner idea of freedom*”; this [idea], because it comprises these two worlds within itself, will consequently also be their common *principle*.¹

Of this absolute freedom we become conscious only by means of an *act*, [and] it is impossible to deduce it any further.

The source of all self-consciousness is the *will*. However, in the *absolute will* the spirit becomes aware of itself immediately, that is, it has an *intellectual intuition of itself*.³⁵ We call this an *intuition* because it [is] *unmediated* [and] *intellectual*, because it has for its object an *activity* that goes far beyond anything empirical and thus can never be reached by *concepts*. Whatever is presented by concepts is *static*. That is, there are only concepts of objects and of that which is *limited* and *intuited* in sensible manner. The concept of movement is not movement itself, and without an intuition we would not know what movement itself is. *Freedom*, however, is recognized only by freedom, and *activity* is

¹Kant's words in his treatise: *Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie*.³⁴

apprehended only by activity. If we were not granted the capacity for an intellectual intuition, we would remain forever trapped within our objective representations; nor would any *transcendental thinking* be possible, nor any transcendental imagination and philosophy, be it theoretical or practical.

It is this continuous intuition of *ourselves* in our pure activity that alone renders possible the *objective* unity of apperception and the correlate of all apperception, the *I think*. It is true that the proposition: "I think" is merely empirical, however the 'I' in this proposition is a *purely intellectual representation* in that it necessarily precedes all empirical thinking.^k

1,402

It is only this continuous activity of self-intuition and its supporting, transcendental freedom that prevents *my own self* from drowning in the stream of representations and that carries me from act to act, from thought to thought, from time to time (on invisible wings, as it were). <Following what Prof. Fichte has said about this matter in volume 5, no. iv of the *Philosophisches Journal* nothing remains to be added. The entire inquiry belongs properly to *aesthetics* (at which point I shall indeed once more take up this issue).³⁷ For only aesthetics opens *access* to all of philosophy, because it is only by means of [aesthetics] that we can explain what constitutes the *spirit* of philosophy. (To philosophize without it is no better than to exist outside of time or to write poetry without imagination.)>

All enthusiasm transgresses the limits of reason. These limits, we claim, the spirit establishes for itself, for it creates its own sphere for itself, intuits itself only in this sphere, and outside of this sphere there exists nothing for it. It is truly ridiculous to suspect of enthusiasm precisely *that* which renders enthusiasm impossible forever.³⁸

Finally, this philosophy is perhaps more safeguarded against possible comparisons between itself and others. How inferior to the thrust of *this* philosophy remain those inquiries into a first principle of philosophy that for some time have sought to resurrect the very anathema of transcendental thinking: traditional dogmatism. From its very onset, dogmatism commits its supporters to a necessary system of representations, one that prevents us from discovering an exit as well as from forging a passage to the superior order of freedom. Transcendental philosophy has the characteristic of placing him who has grasped it immediately in freedom by breaking the fetters wherein

1,403

^kOnce again, Kant's own words, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 3d ed., A 423 n.—It is peculiar how certain philosophical writers constantly recite Kant's words for other authors, as if they themselves were immature, or as if of the hundreds of passages in which Kant argues *against the possibility* of an intellectual intuition, they had not at least read *One*. It is as if they were afraid, once it has been proven to them that they did not *understand* their *lord* and *master*, that now they would also lose all credit for sedulously *reading and memorizing his words*, which surely no one wishes to call into question.³⁶

empiricist knowledge has ensnared him. Everything objective is by its very nature restrictive. Even our own creations seem to restrict us once they have left the soul and become objective, and the creative feeling under which they first originated now fades.

By regarding everything objective as initially *nonexistent*, transcendental philosophy aims by its very nature at the *becoming* and the *living*, for its first principles are *genetic*, and both the spirit and the world become and mature concomitantly in transcendental philosophy. Meanwhile, the spirit shares *skepticism's freedom of contemplation* and ratiocination, and it shares the *necessity of the claims* that is proper to *dogmatism*. Its effect will be felt in other sciences, because it does not merely *rouse* other minds but, as through an electric shock, reverses their poles.

IV

"He is an idealist and his system idealistic." In speaking in this manner, some people believe to have defeated both, the man and his system. My dear friends, if you knew that he is only an idealist *to the extent* that he is *simultaneously* and *precisely for that reason* the strictest and most concentrated realist, you would speak differently. What, then, is *your realism*? What does it properly consist of? Is it your claim that something external to you—you do not know what, nor how, nor where—does effect your representations? With all due respect, this is an error. This you have not produced from within yourselves, but you have heard it in some school and now are reciting it without understanding your own claims. Your realism is far older than that claim, [and] it also runs much deeper than that superficial explanation concerning the origin of your representations.

1,404 It is to this *original* realism that we are referring you. It holds and seeks nothing other than that the object of your representation be simultaneously also the real one. Yet this proposition is nothing less than a clear, unmistakable idealism; and however much you may resist it, all of you are *born idealists*.

Of *this* realism your school-philosophers know nothing, simply because for them human nature disappeared long ago as the result of vain conceptual experimentation. *You* shall feel deserving of a better philosophy. Let the dead bury the dead, yet you shall preserve your human nature whose depth no philosophy has yet been able to ground in concepts.

If it could have been foreseen that the blind belief in the *expressions* of one man would reach so much further than the belief in his philosophy as such, we should have deplored that Kant presented his philosophy—which was designed to destruct all dogmatism down to its very foundations—in the language of dogmatism.

"We have no knowledge of things in themselves," Kant says. If someone was to say 'I do not know Mr. X.,' then this means 'I surely know that this X. exists in *rerum natura*; it is only that I myself do not know him.' To be sure, then, this expression presupposes the existence of things in themselves. It is as if a dogmatic person were speaking, trying to explain Kant's claims for a third party in his language.

Nevertheless, by not adhering to the words but instead aiming at their substance, a Kantian would have to claim, contrary to the letter yet in accordance with the spirit of his teacher, *that we really know the things as they are in themselves, that is, that between the thing represented and the real object there does not exist any difference.*

Some are said to boast with claims that their lord and master ought to be understood literally.³⁹ They fail to realize that even in the letter of this man, there lies so much more than they can every comprehend. <They do not understand that a bold philosophy also warrants a bold diction, and that the *verbal timidity* that characterizes them, befits only small spirits.> If Kant were truly to be understood according to the raw letter, no one would have understood him better than his opponents, such as Mr. Benedikt Stattler, among others, and especially a certain Mr. Schäffer who, in 1792, published a piece entitled: *Inconsistencies and Striking Contradictions in the Kantian Philosophy, Particularly in the Critique of Pure Reason* (Dessau: Hofmann), 8 Groschen.⁴⁰ <Yet what does spirit and letter mean? The letter as such is and remains dead. Even you, who recite [Kant's words], infuse a spirit into the letter of your master—though a spirit (or nonspirit) of *your own kind*. Hence, because you realize that in philosophizing, however one may go about it, no progress is being made without *volens nolens* philosophizing oneself, why not *admit* that this is what you are doing; feel free to philosophize openly [and] on your own behalf, and do not boast with the letters of another one.

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In addition, it is plain enough that this lord and master has not counted on *you*. Otherwise he would have attacked your philosophy at its roots. For this [philosophy] is a spoiled Reason, characterized by a perpetual desire for things in themselves and similar chimeras. However, *to say* that we do not know of things in themselves (while readily extending your heartfelt condolences to all of philosophy about this loss, for which we then blame the *limited nature* of our cognitive faculty) does not *exterminate* this desire but nourishes and supports it.

The only thing to be regretted here is that even the letter of Kant's philosophy was too bold for most people.>

Every bold expression in philosophy borders on dogmatism, for it seeks to represent something that can never be the *object* of representation. It *symbolizes* that which it cannot render *sensible*. If the symbol is mistaken for the object itself, a philosophy is bound to emerge that sounds even more

adventurous than the religion of the old Egyptians or the mythology of the Hindus {according to the modern conception of these}.

Before Kant, *things in themselves* were hardly conceived in the particular sense in which he speaks of them. They were merely supposed to constitute the *check* that would first rouse the reader from the slumber of *empiricism*, the [philosophy] that presumes to be able to explain experience with experience [and] mechanics with mechanics.

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“The principle of the sensible cannot once again lie in the sensible; it must lie in the supersensible.” Such Kant claims, as indeed all true philosophers *before* him had claimed it and as his contemporary, Jacobi, had postulated it with unrivalled lucidity and excellence.⁴¹ Precisely herein lies the character of all sensibility, that it is *conditional* [and] does not contain its ground *within itself*.

Kant symbolized this supersensible ground of all sensibility with his expression of *things in themselves*—an expression that, like all symbolic expressions, contains a *contradiction* because it aims at presenting the unconditional [*das Unbedingte*] by means of something conditional [*ein Bedingtes*]. Yet such contradictory (inconsistent) expressions are the only ones by means of which we are able to present *ideas* at all. It has become well known what *unaesthetic* minds can do to such a phrase. Plato *exhausts* himself trying to express that the *ideas* contain a *Being* that reaches far beyond all *empirical existence*. Nevertheless, even in our days we encounter “proofs” that show how Plato’s *ideas* are *real substances* no less than Kant’s *things in themselves*. (See Plessing’s *Mnemonium* and other writings.)⁴²

A peculiar passage about this matter can be found in Kant’s polemic against Mr. Eberhard (“On a Discovery . . .,” pp. 55, 561):

That we will have to arrive at *things in themselves*” [Eberhard’s claim] is precisely what the *Critique* constantly asserts. The only difference is that it places this ground of the matter of sensible representations not itself again in things as objects of the senses, but in something supersensible, which *grounds* the sensible representations, and of which we can have no (*viz.* theoretical, categorical, directed at an entity [S.]) knowledge. It says: the objects as things in themselves *give* matter to empirical intuition (they contain the ground of the determination of the faculty of representation in accordance with its sensibility), but they *are not* the matter of these intuitions.⁴³

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It is apparent that “things in themselves” here designate merely the *idea* of a supersensible ground for representation; they contain only the *ground* for the *sensible determination* of the faculty of representation. Without this *determination* we would never become conscious of this supersensible ground. *Only in this act of determination (of ourselves) are the two worlds distinguished, the*

sensible one (the real world of appearances), and the supersensible one (the ideal world of things in themselves).

I am well aware that Kant's *theoretical* philosophy leaves this supersensible principle, in accordance with which all representations are to be constructed, completely undetermined. Elsewhere he polemically opposes materialism with this hypothetical claim: that it might well be that the *intelligible substrate of matter and thinking were the same*.

I recall having read, in Mr. Schulz's explications, how what destines us to representation is *most likely not all that different from the soul itself*. And yet everything here remains uncertain and tenuous, to be sure.

In developing the system of his theoretical philosophy, Kant also leaves *unexplained* all that could be explained only through *this primordial, inner principle of all representation* (which he nowhere attempts to determine.) Of this I merely wish to provide one instance.

He deduces the categories from the formal functions of understanding (in its logical application); these very functions themselves require once again a higher deduction and should be deduced, conversely, from the categories. Having introduced the table of categories, he continues as follows: "This table of categories suggests some nice points, which may perhaps have important consequences in regard to the scientific form obtainable by reason;" that is, "in view of the fact that all a priori division of concepts must be by dichotomy, it is significant that in each class the number of the categories is always the same, namely, three. Further, it may be observed that the third category in each class always *arises* from the combination of the second with the first (i.e., by way of a synthesis)."⁴⁴

Anyone will admit that, in this table of the categories, the primordial form according to which the spirit proceeds in all its constructions has been presented plainly and with mathematical precision. Yet we cannot understand what it is that constrains the human spirit at all to *construct from opposites* everything whereof it has an intuition and cognition, unless we consider the *primordial dualism* in the human spirit that Kant elaborated in his practical philosophy although merely *presupposing* it everywhere in his theoretical [philosophy].

Considerations of this kind are not philosophical ruminations, for they extend as far as they are profound. Those two categories mentioned by Kant are the main branches of one trunk spreading out over all of nature with infinite *diversity* [*Verzweigungen*]. Not only the possibility of matter and a world construct in general but also the entire mechanism and organism of nature leads us back to this duplicity of the principles. <Perhaps, it will yet be proven that all so-called miraculous (i.e., thus far unexplained) natural phenomena stem from reciprocal [activity] between substantive matter and a certain, still obscure, *fluidum* by which our planetary system and doubtless all of outer space are filled; what we *know* of this fluid is that it appears in the

most diverse forms, yet that it appears *active* always only in its *division* (into positive and negative matter).>

The table of categories has been copied, printed and reprinted countless times, and a fair amount of formalistic non-sense has been proposed [in its regard]; thus far, however, little has been understood about the *real* application that Kant had in mind for it when he suggested that the introduction of this [table] should prove beneficial to all sciences.

1,409 To return to my [argument], in Kant's theoretical philosophy, the supersensible principle of all representation is merely being hinted at. In his practical philosophy, however, the *autonomy of the will* and our intrinsic *freedom* (the only supersensible thing of which we are certain) suddenly appear as the principles of our *activity*. It is here, then, that the riddle is solved.⁴⁵ Thus, when Reinhold (whose treatise "The Present State of Metaphysics," in the second part of his *Collected Writings*, has inspired the following remarks) asks whether the transcendental idealism, in its entire scope first established by Fichte, is identical with Kant's [idealism] or whether its underlying thesis differs from the latter, the thesis being that the principle of the representations be merely an inner one (and hence ought not to be looked for in anything separate of the self); the answer, according to the preceding, is as follows:⁴⁶

Both philosophers concur in claiming that the ground for our representations cannot be found in the sensible but only in the *supersensible* [world]. This supersensible ground Kant must *symbolize* in his theoretical philosophy, thus speaking of *things in themselves* that *provide* the substance for our representations. Fichte can dispense with this symbolical presentation because he no longer treats theoretical philosophy as separate from the practical, as Kant had done. Fichte's merit consists precisely in *expanding* the *unique* principle—that with which Kant opens the practical philosophy (i.e., the autonomy of the will)—into the principle of the *entire philosophy*; in doing so he becomes the founder of a philosophy that can be legitimately called a *higher philosophy* because its spirit is *neither theoretical nor practical* alone but *both at once*.

1,410 Reinhold himself explains (in the text cited above, pp. xi–xii of the Preface) that it was not his purpose to present this idealism in its entire scope. He particularly emphasizes that the principle of this [idealism] *lies outside of theoretical philosophy*. "Sensibility and Understanding," he notes, "are thinkable only in relation to a nonself that, far from being posited by sensibility and understanding, is merely *presupposed*." (This passage is bound to provoke misunderstanding, for strictly speaking neither the understanding nor sensibility *presuppose an object*, since the world of objects is nothing but our own, primordial sensibility and understanding. The understanding neither presupposes the object, nor does the object presuppose it (as a static faculty). The understanding (in [its] constructing activity) and the object are one and the

same and inseparable. Reinhold merely wishes to note that sensibility and understanding are not conceivable without the object (that originates through them), as is evidenced by [their] very opposition: "Pure Reason, then, is *absolute activity*." We may indeed take "pure reason" to refer to both, theoretical and practical reason, with the qualification being that the former does not constitute an *absolute activity* but is merely imagination enhanced (by practical reason). Therefore Reinhold here appears to understand pure reason as practical [reason]. In this case, however, we must ask how this passage ("Pure reason is *absolute activity*") can be reconciled with the subsequent remarks on the Kantian concepts concerning the freedom of the will. For there we read that the freedom of will is radically *different* from pure (practical) reason. To be sure, I do not know how practical (i.e., legislating) reason can be thought to differ from the *will*, which is supposed to be inherently legislative. We shall return to this issue later on. However the case may stand, this much should be certain in light of the previous, namely, that the author has assumed the *practical* standpoint of idealism while ignoring its *theoretical* standpoint.

"The Self opposes to itself a Nonsel. Through the same absolute act (whereby the Self posits itself) the Nonsel is posited as such." This proposition introduces the primordial antithesis: "*the Self opposes to itself a Nonsel*, or the Nonsel is posited unconditionally by the Self."—If someone should attempt to derive from this passage a complete concept of transcendental idealism, the proposition: "the Self opposes itself to the Nonsel," or "the Nonsel is being posited unconditionally by the Self" could only be taken to mean the following: "the Self posits a Nonsel as opposing the Self in *ideal manner* [in *der Idee*]." Such a notion however, would contribute nothing to the explanation of our objective representations.⁴⁷

For that act of *opposing* is a *free* act, accompanied by *consciousness*, not a *primordial* and hence not a *necessary* act. The Self, however, opposes itself to the Nonsel, and precisely by doing so, it becomes *practical*. Yet it cannot do so, hence cannot become *practical*, without either presupposing the Nonsel or presupposing *itself as limited* by the Nonsel. Still, the *feeling* of this limitation arises only *through* this opposing activity, and yet this feeling could not arise unless this limitation was *primordial* and *real*. Hence, for the Self to become *practical* (which is at issue here) two things are required: (1) that the Self be restricted in its representations (yet the Self is not limited in the way that an *object* is limited, namely, with the limitation being assigned to it without any activity of the self; rather, it *feels itself to be restricted*; for Self in general is nothing except for what it intuits and feels within itself); yet it cannot *feel* itself as restricted without *opposing* to itself the restriction in an *ideal* sense; hence (2) it must *oppose* this restriction (as the Nonsel) against itself. This, however, it cannot do without being limited in a *real* sense.

Thus we find ourselves caught in a vicious circle that, if understood strictly and properly, opens for us the nature of our spirit and raises [us] instantly to the supreme standpoint of transcendental idealism.

1,412 "We cannot act in an *ideal* sense, [that is,] we cannot *oppose* ourselves to the primordial limitation, without *being limited* in a *real* sense; and conversely, we *are* not limited in a *real* sense without *feeling* this limitation, i.e., without *opposing* it to ourselves in an *ideal* sense."⁴⁸ As becomes apparent, the act whereby we *become* (passively) limited and that other act whereby we (actively) *limit ourselves* by *opposing* the limitation to ourselves are *the same act* of our spirit; hence we, too, are, and *in the same act, simultaneously passive and active, determining and determined*, and thus, within the same act, *reality* (necessity) and *ideality* (freedom) are united. As far as I know, <and everybody may say what he is convinced of knowing> this is the *core* of transcendental idealism. For by now it has become clear that the original nature of the spirit consists of this absolute identity of activity and passivity, and that from here issues that marvelous phenomenon of *feeling* (*of the sensible-spiritual* in us) that no philosophy has explained thus far, and that this primordial reciprocity with ourselves properly constitutes the *inner principle of our representations* that thus far all genuine philosophers have sought, though most of them have done so in vain.

Because Reinhold grasped only one of these acts, *both of which together and in their absolute union* constitute the proper catalyst of our entire spiritual activity, and because furthermore these two acts—combined into *One* by Idealism—acquire meaning and significance only in *reciprocity and through one another*, it is apparent that no complete concept of this system can be deduced from [Reinhold's] presentation of it.

The proposition, "the Self opposes to itself the Nonself unconditionally," expresses merely an *ideal* act; however, this proposition as the *principle for explaining the origins of our representation* (and as such it is introduced by the author) remains utterly unintelligible as long as it is introduced in this *unilateral* manner. For it cannot be understood how, through a *merely ideal* opposition, *real representations* should originate.

1,413 Considered theoretically, the proposition "the Self opposes to itself the Nonself unconditionally" is *completely wrong*. The idealism of theoretical philosophy proves strictly *antidualistic*; it postulates the absolute identity of the object and the subject in the representation; when asked what the object is, the idealist will answer: *I myself* in my finite acts of production. From a theoretical point of view it is also wrong that the Self opposes to itself the Nonself *unconditionally*; much rather, theoretical philosophy presupposes an *affect* in the Self as the *precondition* for the object. However, representation cannot be explained as the result of a *mere affect* but, instead, requires a *primordial union of activity and passivity*, that is, a *self-determining, self-affecting* nature.

The preceding remarks have not been made on account of that one man whose treatise elicited them, but because of *others* who might content themselves with authority, and in particular *this* authority [i.e., Reinhold], rather than reason. Because it can still be heard daily that the *Science of Knowledge* contains not only the boldest but, in fact, the most absurd idealism—one that would obviate the *necessity* of all our objective representations—and because the unilateral presentation of this system (namely, when presented exclusively from the practical standpoint) and of propositions such as “the Self opposes to itself the NonselF unconditionally,” *theoretically* understood, do indeed conjure up the chimera of *such* an Idealism among imbeciles, it cannot be without benefit to expose this lopsidedness; [this we do] not to protect the *Science of Knowledge* against *such* explanations (that it does most competently itself), but merely to spare ourselves and others of the same persuasion the *despondency* that invariably overcomes us when we accidentally happen upon such statements in some journal or when we hear them repeated in conversation. Moreover, it is about time that we stop returning to the alphabet of philosophy merely for the sake of accommodating some inferior minds in our country, all the more so, because the path ahead of this philosophy is still long and because the declared enemies that litter [the path] behind it are of no significance.

It is only on account of this *original identity of the theoretical and the practical in us* that the affective within us becomes thought, that the Real becomes *Ideal*, and vice versa.¹ Without making this [identity] the principle of our entire philosophy, we may refer the apprentice to the *primordial* theoretical acts of the spirit, to be sure, yet we can never afford these acts anything but a merely *ideal* significance. Similar to the *Only Possible Doctrine of Standpoint* (as Mr. Reinhold entitles the teachings of Mr. Beck in Halle), we can ask, implore, and admonish the reader or listener to *represent* *primordially*, to put himself in *the position of this primordial representation*, and should this prove necessary, to place himself even *on another planet* where we encounter all kinds of new objects for which we have thus far no concept;⁴⁹ this we can repeat ad infinitum; we can rotate on this orbit of words forever, thereby exhausting everybody’s interest, without ever being *certain* that anybody has understood us. For if someone were to associate a meaning with these expressions, this would occur merely because he already knows in advance what we mean to say. That this *primordial representing*, this *primordial constructing* ought to be not merely *ideal* but *real* and of *primordial necessity*, all that I can never make intelligible to anybody without unfolding for him the innermost principle of all representation. This inner principle, however, is nothing other

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¹I must refer the reader to the preceding section of this treatise where this particular claim has been deduced from principles.

than the original *act* of the *spirit onto itself*, the *primordial autonomy* that, seen from the theoretical standpoint, involves a *representing* or, which amounts to the same, a *constructing of finite objects*, [and that] from the *practical* standpoint, is a *will*.

This primordial self-determination of the spirit, then, I may indeed express in a *fundamental proposition* [Grundsatz]. However, this proposition is necessarily a *postulate* in relation to that *whereby I express myself*; that is, I must postulate it as an abstraction from all the materiality otherwise associated with *representation* and the *will*, so that it may attain an intuition of itself in its *absolute act of self-affection*. I am *justified* in making this postulate, for it is not a *merely theoretical* postulate; whoever is incapable of fulfilling its requisites at least *ought* to be able to fulfill them. For the *moral law* requires of him a mode of activity that (as is indeed the case with most people) he cannot grasp without becoming conscious of his *primordial spirituality*; it presents to him an *absolute* state to be reached by him as an idea that he could not understand if he had not (to put it in Plato's language) attained an intuition of its archetype in the intellectual world (i.e., within himself as a spiritual being).⁵⁰

By contrast, a merely theoretical postulate, for example, that we should assume the standpoint of primordial representation and, for this purpose, should imagine ourselves even on another planet, does not involve any *necessity* whatsoever; for he who understands its necessity has already, long ago, spontaneously fulfilled that postulate (of primordial representation). Any understanding of this [postulate], then, is belated, and if it comes at the right time it is still not *understood*;^m for even if we imagined a being simple enough to try to effect this operation of the spirit by force, he still could not know how to go about it, and he might well be more ignorant about himself after accomplishing this feat than he was before.

The situation is this: primordial representation is something that, if we are to understand it, will in its own right still require a deduction. Assur-

^mThe most obvious proof for all of this is provided by the fate of Mr. Beck's philosophy. It was delightful to see people who had not even understood the first sentence in the *Critique of Pure Reason* suddenly assure us, upon the publication of the "Doctrine of Standpoint," that they themselves had understood Kant *precisely in this manner* and not differently. Yet your very nature resists such a system, and your slavish adherence to Kant's name is far too blind as to permit you to credit him with such a system, a system that to you cannot but sound like plain nonsense. We can infer as much on the basis of the *timid objections* with which you have tried to alleviate your anxious bosom. One of you, who customarily shrouds his ignorance behind a dignified smile, once asked Mr. Beck rather anxiously (the first time that he honestly states what is on his mind) whether—if, say, a bolt of lightning should happen to issue from the clouds and (may God give that it will!) were to strike Mr. Beck—*whether this, too, would count among his primordial representations?*

ances—such as that in answering the question concerning the meaning of “primordial representation” we are not asked to explain what is meant by an *object*, by *primordial*, and by a *representation for oneself*—since the question itself merits no answer whatsoever—but, rather, that “the proper answer consists of this primordial representation itself”—assurances of this kind would be fair enough if the postulate was to possess internal, mathematical evidence.

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Without doubt, the [proponent of the] “Doctrine of Standpoint” will reply that “whoever does not understand my postulate *a priori* or does not understand that it constitutes the first condition for all philosophy proves simply unfit for its [wisdom]; and whoever says these things thereby declares that he is not and cannot be a philosopher.” Such rigor directed against the *ignavum pecus* is in principle fair enough, <and the empirical touchstone of the true philosophy is surely that it is *absolutely unintelligible for all those, however large their number, who lack in spirit*>.⁵¹ In this particular case, however, the “Doctrine of Standpoint” should not boast with “being able to *demonstrate* for everyone that, if his mode of representation does not coincide with that of the doctrine, he surely could not know anything about philosophy, regardless of whether he calls himself a dogmatic, skeptical or critical philosopher.” There is only one kind of postulate that possesses *compulsory* [zwingend] force, namely, those of *mathematics*, for they are simultaneously demonstrable for our external intuition. Yet in philosophy, theoretical postulates (because they demand a construction intelligible only for the inner sense) can obtain their *compulsory* force exclusively through an affinity with *moral* postulates, for the latter ones are categorical [and] hence are *binding* [nöthigend] themselves.⁵² Now, such an affinity cannot be found at all in the postulate of primordial representation. Hence it is not a *postulate*, for it does not contain anything that could be postulated with universal validity. *Under no circumstances* can primordial representation be a *postulate*; on the contrary, it is a *task* in philosophy.

Any postulate to be placed independently at the beginning of philosophy would have to be not only theoretical but would simultaneously require a practical aspect; it would have to be *theoretical* and *practical* at the same time. This already follows from what has been said thus far. Still, there remains a yet more specific reason why no merely theoretical postulate could ever serve as the principle of philosophy.

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That is, philosophy *itself* is not a science that can be *learned* like any other one, but it is itself the *scientific spirit* which we must already possess for any learning, if it is not to degenerate into a merely *historical* knowledge. Thus philosophy is not only the instrument but also the product of culture and education. It is to possess a quality that will set it apart from the other

⁵¹Regarding this issue, I refer my reader to the appendix that follows.

sciences. This distinctive mark consists of the fact that freedom and autonomy play a much greater role in [philosophy] than in all other sciences. The philosophy of a human being shall also be the standard of his culture and, in turn, it shall serve to educate man. If, then, philosophy is a science whose comprehension requires a certain degree of free spirit, it cannot be *everybody's property*, i.e., it cannot proceed from a theoreticuniversal postulate of a priori validity. Already its first postulate is bound to contain something that will exclude certain people forever, <[i.e.,] it must already be *intolerant* in its very first principles.> Not only must it defend against people trying to shroud their imbecility behind a memorized jargon of technical terms {*Schulwörter*}, but it must also work on closing the[se old] ledgers so that in the future all able minds will be pursuing sciences that have still an immediate impact on life. Hence [philosophy] *itself* must seek to forge a passage toward life itself (through education and formation), thereby assuring that in the future it will no longer have to be *taught* and *learned*. In short, it must proceed from a principle that, even though it does not apply universally, *should* be universally valid. To have an impact on ignorant people, it must already involve a *practical* interest (*sacri quid*) in its very first principle. It must begin with a postulate that is identical with or, rather, contains the first reason for the [following] practically universal postulates: to be conscious of oneself as a *spiritual* being [and] to annihilate within oneself all *empiricism* as a *principle*.

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Since ancient times it has been a custom to have the sacred fire of philosophy preserved by pure hands. During the glorious empires of the ancient world the first founders, i.e., the first sages of that world, sought to shelter truth from profane spirits, that is, from spirits undeserving of truth, by hiding it in mysteries. With the gradual advancement of culture, and with individual minds pushing beyond the barriers of these original institutions, philosophical schools were founded not for the purpose of committing philosophy to memory but to *educate* the youths. Moreover, these schools continued to hold on to the distinction between an esoteric and an exoteric philosophy long afterward. At the same time when, in Greece, the Sophists denigrated philosophy as a mere profession and mode of subsistence, the state, too, fell from its previous greatness, and philosophy deteriorated into deplorable techniques of persuasion and deception by means of false arguments.

Even if we were to assume that philosophy had not posited some such agenda for the good of humanity, and that it was merely an *exercise of the mind* (which surely must be unique in kind, because after so many failed endeavors people still persist in their attempts to philosophize), the *scientific* interest itself would still require that the principle of philosophy be not merely a theoretical one.

For (1) the *theoretical* acts of the human spirit themselves acquire *real* significance only in opposition to the *practical* ones. That the primordial acts

of the spirit are *necessary* we realize only in opposition to the spontaneity of free acts. However, that the spirit therefore is not and cannot be merely *passive* in its representations we once again realize only by virtue of the fact that it *thinks* this passivity, i.e., that it *elevates* itself above it or, in other words, that it *acts in freedom*. Meanwhile, theoretical philosophy's difficulties to explain representation are specifically these: namely, to unite necessity and freedom, coercion and autonomy, passivity and activity; for to the extent that we sacrifice passivity for activity or activity for passivity, we alternatively happen upon a dogmatic Idealism or a dogmatic Realism (or Empiricism), two systems that are equally erroneous. Hence, if we should choose to proceed from an exclusively theoretical act, as does the "only possible Doctrine of Standpoint," we will find it impossible to explain the feeling of necessity that accompanies all objective representations; and, notwithstanding our vigorous protestations, all these primordial acts will invariably dissolve into merely *ideal* ones. To be sure, the "Doctrine of Standpoint" may forwarn us "that it does not speak of a primordial *representation*, since all representation already *presupposes* an object which we (do not create but, after it has already been created) *think* by means of the former; *rather*, the *primordial representation* is being understood as an act by means of which we produce the object itself." Still, all these cautionary remarks are to no avail, for this same "Doctrine of Standpoint" feels compelled before long to conceive of the primordial representation as identical with the *application of understanding*, thus declaring that "the primordial representation is grounded in the *categories*."

Any reader, however, will soon advance the following objection: understanding is the faculty of *concepts*; however, concepts are nothing *primordial* but only the abstraction *from something primordial*; concepts are never *necessary* but always strictly *ideal* acts. *Categories* are not the *primordial act* itself that you *intend to render suitable*, even though that can never be accomplished within the limits that you yourself have established beforehand; the [categories] constitute not the [act of] *primordial representation* but only the *representation* of this [act] itself. Thus the ["Doctrine of Standpoint"] becomes entangled in its own postulates, first by insisting that the explanation of the origin of representation remains strictly separate from all *discursive thinking*, and then by resorting to *discursive* representations when explaining the *primordial representation* with the *application of understanding in the categories*. Surely, we now understand perfectly well what caused this [doctrine] to evolve in this manner, and consequently we should not become confused about its proper meaning and intention; for we realize that from your standpoint, the *primordial representation cannot* be made intelligible and hence that this aporetic procedure constitutes a shortcoming not of the author, but of his *standpoint*.

No doubt, if someone were to try to explain this primordial representation to others, the "Doctrine of Standpoint" would ask how else he could make this [act] intelligible except by means of concepts, [that is,] by means of

representations of this primordial representation. To this it could be replied only that no one had ever wished to explain the primordial representation to another person by means of *concepts* and that, precisely for this reason, it ought to prove impossible to postulate such a primordial representation from the outset. Rather one ought to admonish the apprentice to *abstract* from all representation in order to place him in unconditional freedom as regards [representation]. However, we claim that the human spirit, in abstracting from everything objective, possesses by virtue of this very act an *intuition of itself*, which we shall call *intellectual*, because its object is merely an intellectual act. At the same time, we claim that this intuition is an act whereby a pure self-consciousness *originates*, and that consequently the human spirit itself is nothing but *this pure self-consciousness*. Here, then, we have an *intuition* whose object is a *primordial act*, namely, an intuition that we must not merely attempt to *awaken* in others by means of *concepts*, but which we are *entitled to postulate* for everyone, because without this act the *moral law* itself—i.e., a postulate directed *absolutely* and *unconditionally* at every human being by virtue of its humanity—would prove completely unintelligible.^o

1,421 Hence, if the actual task is to explicate the primordial representation in concepts and to dissect the primordial application of the understanding, we will still be far ahead of those who simply postulate such a primordial representation; for in our grounding proposition, the inner principle of all representation has already found its expression. “The objective-synthetic unity of self-consciousness,” Mr. Beck notes, “is the supreme moment in *any* employment of the *understanding*.” However, [for Beck] this objective-

^oPerhaps it will be asked: “how is it that so many can claim that this intuition appear so utterly strange and incomprehensible to them?” To answer such questions is not *our* responsibility but behooves those who *ask* lest they *be* asked themselves. Because for us this intuition is altogether clear, and because we cannot be charged with any [naive] enthusiasm, we should be the ones to ask: why have you not yet raised this intuition (without which you are not conscious of yourselves as moral and intelligent beings) to a clear and distinct consciousness? For this act (which primordially falls before all consciousness), *when raised to the level of consciousness*, produces what we call a *pure self-consciousness*; meanwhile, you will have to concede that the purity of this self-consciousness is a corollary of our moral and intellectual culture (which surely is our own creation), just as you must concede that *without* such a self-consciousness you are not even capable of any *pure* (nonempirical) activity, not even of transcendental *thinking*, of which you ought to, or want to, be capable. Also, I have searched in vain in Kant and among his heirs for an explanation of *self-consciousness*. Nevertheless, his entire philosophy is without support unless he provides us with the *medium* through which the *intelligible* (pure reason, as he calls it) speaks to the *sensible* (the empirical); and, finally, unless our entire essence is to be dissolved into shallow concepts, he assuredly will have to arrive at an *intuition* that is *purely intellectual* and higher than all representation and abstraction.

synthetic unity of consciousness seems to have descended from heaven as it were, and Mr. Reinhold quite rightly notes (on p.315) that “it is a common error among the *explicators* of the critical philosophy—though we can hardly point up a more glaring instance than that provided by Mr. Beck’s discussion of the categories—to assume that the expressions these [*explicators*] have extracted from the critique (e.g., *synthetic unity*, *objective unity*, the categories) will prove just as intelligible to their readers, whose lack of any firsthand knowledge of the *Critique* they purport to remedy, as they appear for those [*explicators*] who have themselves become acquainted with these terms merely through the *Critique* itself and through their *employment* in the course of their own meditations.⁹

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In any event, it is to ask too much of the reader when the “Doctrine of Standpoint” demands that we think of the understanding, a secondary, derivative, and ideal faculty, as something *primordial*. To be sure, we are well aware that the understanding is nothing but the conceptual faculty, and that the concepts once again are merely *abstractions* from our primordial *mode of intuition*; moreover, the dissections of the pure understanding, also known as categories, do not actually express anything but the most primordial and necessary mode of activity of the spirit during intuition or, because the *object* is not all distinct from this mode of activity, the primordial *synthesis* whereby alone any object *becomes* and *originates*. If, alternatively, the object is *primordially* nothing but a determinate mode of activity (construction) of our spirit, we must nevertheless oppose this mode of activity to ourselves, for otherwise no representation of an *object* would ever originate within ourselves. (The “Doctrine of Standpoint” claims there exists no primordial representation of an *object* but merely a *primordial representing*, because any representation of an *object* always involves a ready-made *concept*.) Now, we cannot [oppose this mode of activity] without *abstracting* from that determinate *mode of activity*. Such is the task of the *understanding*, and in doing so, there originates for it the *concept*, i.e., a universal representation of the spirit’s mode of activity. As this universal representation of the process of the spirit in intuition in *general* is being opposed to the *determinate* process in the *present* intuition, the *concept* becomes distinguishable from the [corresponding] *object* for the [opposing] consciousness, even though both are *primordially* the same. From the viewpoint of consciousness, then, *understanding* and *sensibility* are two altogether

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⁹Such an [employment], then, must have been quite rigorous in the case of Mr. Beck and, if his impoverished diction is any indication, it must have become a full-fledged literal *habit*. Anyone patient enough to follow Mr. Beck, if only with his eyes, to all those places where he has put his “single possible philosophy” on public display will recall the tiresome and relentless repetition of certain expressions that [Mr. Beck] was never capable of explaining and by means of which he attempted to hypnotize, as if employing some magical incantation, philosophy itself forever.

distinct faculties, and intuition and concept are two altogether distinct activities. To be sure, we understand perfectly well that *primordially*, i.e., *before consciousness* they cannot be distinguished at all, because consciousness itself originates only by virtue of this distinction. Under no circumstances, however, is the "Doctrine of Standpoint" justified in making reference to an activity that lies *beyond* consciousness; to be sure, it may postulate that we *represent primordially*; yet to do so would be nothing less than to postulate that *there be a representation with consciousness beyond consciousness*, which is plain nonsense. Consequently, it can postulate merely that we *represent for ourselves the primordial representation*, i.e., that we form for ourselves a concept of the primordial representation. Thus, in the final analysis, the entire system depends, dead and mechanistic as indeed it is, on a *concept* that this philosophy cannot possibly render intelligible.

We have no choice but to join Mr. Reinhold's objection, namely, that the "Doctrine of Standpoint" altogether erases the entire Transcendental Aesthetic and the distinction, so often reaffirmed by Kant, between transcendental sensibility and transcendental understanding; [Mr. Reinhold is also right in noting] that the efforts of the [present doctrine] to explain the Real, i.e., the sensation in our representations, prove futile, because it is incapable of adducing anything but ideal acts, and because it must bluntly proclaim that sensation is the activity of the primordial *understanding*, which may indeed make sense, but only if we understand words such as *understanding*, etc., against the grain of their common usage.⁹

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We know quite well that all acts, including the primordial acts of the spirit, appear *ideal* only if we *reflect* on them from the standpoint of consciousness. Yet for our [ability] to do so, too, we must exhibit the ground, all the more so, because the Ideal cannot be thought except in opposition to the Real. Yet ideality and reality (representation and object, concept and intuition) differ only in consciousness; beyond consciousness, then, there must not exist any difference between the ideal and the real activity.

With this the "Doctrine of Standpoint" agrees, when Mr. Beck states: It amounts to nothing whatsoever to introduce sensation [*Empfindung*] as the differential criterion between what is to be called *a priori* and *a posteriori*, respectively, and to consider those concepts *a priori* that are *free* of sensation. The "Doctrine," however, can merely *postulate* that there ought to be no difference between what is *a priori* or ideal and what is *a posteriori* or real; and its

⁹Mr. Beck can merely exterminate the *thing in itself* without knowing how to replace it. Nevertheless it is impossible to continue without a *supersensible* ground for the reality of our representations, for why else could Kant have employed that expression, so contradictory for his "explicators," to designate this ground? To be sure, Mr. Beck can *prove* the inconsistency of a thing in itself, yet he cannot explain how a reasonable being could nevertheless find [the expression] meaningful.

postulate, [namely,] to put oneself in the position of primordial representation, means indeed nothing but to represent for oneself the *primordial* activity of the spirit in which there exists no difference between a priori and a posteriori or, in other words, [the activity] wherein the Ideal has not yet been differentiated in any form whatsoever from the Real (i.e., the concept from the intuition). Meanwhile, this "Doctrine" can only *postulate* the representation of such a primordial activity, and nothing more than that, [for] it is unable to demonstrate how and why the presupposition of such a primordial activity should be *necessary*.

This primordial [act of] construction, however, is nothing but a *synthesis*, and the "Doctrine of Standpoint" boasts with having distinguished itself (namely, by not proceeding beyond the primordial synthesis in any capacity whatsoever); to be sure, that one *could* not proceed beyond it and that it would be *contradictory* to want to do so, all this the "Doctrine" claims in *the context of establishing its philosophical principles* (for we all are perfectly aware that in reality and in representation we can never transcend this [synthesis]); however, the ["Doctrine"] has only asserted, without in any way proving the preceding.

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Against [such charges] the "Doctrine" defends itself with the broad shield of *authority* for which one has regrettably abused the name of the great philosopher [i.e., Kant] at whose *recommendation* (imagine that!) this doctrine is supposed to have originated.

Here, then, we have no choice but to wager our authority against that of the ["Doctrine"]. Whoever attacks with such unphilosophical armor may not complain when he has been defeated by the very same kind.

Meanwhile, the "Doctrine of Standpoint" seems to have paid little attention to the reason for the triadic structure of all the divisions in transcendental philosophy. Yet Kant himself was keenly aware of it, and as he remarks in his ["Introduction" to the] *Critique of Judgment*: "If there is to be a [synthetic] *a priori* division, it must be, according to what is requisite for synthetical unity in general, namely, (1) a condition, (2) a conditioned, and (3) a concept which arises from the union of the conditioned with its union, hence necessarily a trichotomy."⁵² A synthetic unity is surely implied by the primordial synthesis. Consequently, if it is to be possible, the latter will presuppose a *condition* and something that is being *conditioned*. This becomes apparent in the project of the primordial form of the understanding (the table of the categories). For there, as Kant himself notes, the third category of each class results from the union of the first two.

At the same time the following is readily apparent: a condition is not conceivable as real unless something is being conditioned and, conversely, the latter is not [conceivable] without a condition, i.e., both are merely capable of representations *in a third* that results from their *union*. Regarding the categories of quality, we can thus have an *absolute* representation neither of reality nor of negation. {If, for example, we conceive of space as being filled merely

1,426 by a *repelling* force—i.e., without a counterforce—then matter is infinitely extended, a mere void, whereas space would be *empty*. Conversely, if we consider the attracting force absolute, all matter is united in one (mathematical point) and absolutely condensed; once again, then, all space would prove empty.) Hence it is apparent that reality as well as negation, when understood as *absolute*, will not lead us *anywhere*. Both are *representable* only in their union, i.e., we cannot separate them without uniting them, nor unite them without separating them.

Why, then, did Kant nevertheless choose *this* structure of the categories, why did he not proceed from the *third* category of each class, and why did he have the categories of reality and negation precede the third one from which alone they receive their significance? The answer is because this third category exists nowhere and is never innate as an *empty* formula; rather, it must first be *created actively* through an *act* wherein precisely for this reason reality and negation must be *primordially* [and] *absolutely* united. Kant has this third category (the synthesis) *originate* before our own eyes. Not so Mr. Beck, who instead postulates his primordial *synthesis* as *unconditional*, thus proceeding just as the philosophers [who speak] of *innate* concepts. Because *representing*, *constructing*, etc., designate an *acting* and a *doing*, we cannot explain the fact that all our *primordial representing* (or constructing) unites absolutely opposed [elements] unless we postulate a *primordial duplicity in our deeds and acts*. That a condition cannot be represented without a conditioned, nor something conditioned without a condition, but that each time *both* together can be represented only in a *third*, all this we cannot explain except through a *primordial union of the conditioning and the being conditioned in the mode of activity of a representing being*, because this *third* is always a constructive act.

1,427 However, we can in no way represent this duplicity in our doing and acting, this necessary union of opposites in our [acts of] construction as *primordial* for ourselves, which would be necessary according to the preceding, unless we were to presuppose that the *conditioning* and the *conditioned*, the *determining* and the *determined*, the *active* and the *passive* were *primordially* and *absolutely identical in us*; in short, according to the nature of our spirit, it must be equally impossible to *act* without being simultaneously *the object* of that activity, and to be *passive* without being simultaneously *the subject* of that activity.

This primordial identity of the pure and the empirical in us proves to be the proper principle of *transcendental idealism* in its entirety. It is by means of this principle alone that we can explain why, *primordially*, there exists in us no distinction between the Real and the Ideal, between what is *sensed* [*empfunden*] and what is *acted* [*gehandelt*], between what we call (from the standpoint of consciousness) *a priori* and *a posteriori*, and finally, between *transcendental aesthetics* and *transcendental understanding*, i.e., between *intuition* and *concept*.

This primordial duplicity in all our deeds and acts thus proves a *superior* principle, one from which alone the *primordial* synthesis (in which there is to be no difference between intuition and concept, sensibility and understanding) emerges in the same manner in which, for the employment of the understanding, the third category of each class emerges from the first two.

At the same time, it becomes clear that the primordial *representation* cannot be the principle of *all* of philosophy, because it is itself but *one mode*, one modification of that *primordial acting* wherein the *agency* and the *object* of the act are one and the same.

If, then, we direct our attention (2) to the practical sphere, a merely theoretical principle, such as that of a primordial representation, leaves practical philosophy without any foundation; a philosophy thus grounded or, rather, lacking its ground is obliged, as Reinhold notes, to assume as a given (God only knows where from) the *object* of practical philosophy, which cannot be deduced from this principle.

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For, to the extent that the *synthesis* is supposed to be the *supreme moment* in human understanding, we cannot understand how the latter could ever emerge from this synthesis, i.e., how it could ever leave the necessary coherence of its representations and the mechanism of its thinking.¹ Yet if that synthesis itself is nothing but the product of a primordial act of our spirit *onto itself*, we cannot explain the theoretical in us without presupposing, as the *first principle of all philosophy*, that man's spirit is *absolutely free*.⁵³ Indeed, that this spirit is to become conscious of its *representations*, of its *being limited* by them, that it once again turns these representations into objects for itself, as it does in philosophy, [all this] remains incomprehensible unless we assume that the spirit *never ceases to be its own object*, i.e., that it is *absolutely free ad infinitum*, and that it is capable of passing from the state of representation into the state of *free activity*.⁵

However, the spirit cannot spontaneously leave this state of representation without, by virtue of this very act, cancelling all *material* of such representation. Yet, it being impossible for the spirit to act without a material [substratum] for its activity, the latter becomes automatically an act of *volition* [*ein Wollen*], i.e., an *autonomous determination* of the material of [the spirit's] activity.

¹Kant lets all syntheses *originate* through the union of opposites. His self-declared commentator *postulates* synthesis as something for which he is unable to adduce any proof; where Kant introduces [synthesis] in a *synthetic* manner, his explicator [chooses] an *analytic* manner.

⁵If we cannot transcend the primordial synthesis, we always know experience only as a *product*, [and] we cannot speak at all about experience as an *act*; in short, philosophy has no advantage over ordinary consciousness.

1,429 Even so, the spirit is characterized by the fact that its *pure* and *free* acts simultaneously determine the material of their activity, or *that its purity immediately determines the empirical*. We have just demonstrated that, in the theoretical acts of the spirit (in representation), the material of its activity is produced for the spirit by its [own] activity, and that therefore the empirical in it is determined by the transcendental.

The spirit, then, is to become *immediately* conscious through its *will to self*, i.e., through its absolute act. Yet it cannot become conscious of its absolute act without the latter becoming an *object* for the spirit. Hence the object of its volition is supposed to be the spirit *itself* seen as *pure activity*; it is supposed to *will itself*. Yet the spirit itself exists only insofar as that which is pure in it becomes empirical. Thus the only *material* of its will is to be determined immediately and through *form*; in other words, the form of its will shall become the material [base] for its acts, the [spirit's] empirical [dimension] shall be determined by a pure [one, and] consequently *no* (moral) duplicity shall occur within in. This is the true and the proper meaning of the categorical imperative or of the moral law.

However, as we have just demonstrated, the *material* of the moral law is the *pure* within us. Yet the spirit does not become conscious of its *pure act* except through *volition* (that is, by sublating all material of this act to the extent that this [material] has been *given* for the purpose of its autonomous determination). Hence the [spirit] becomes aware of the *material of the moral law* or of *what* is being postulated by the moral law only through volition and only to the extent that *volition is the source of the moral law*.

The form of volition requires that its own material be determined by an absolute act, i.e., that volition be demonstrable into infinity only by and through the act of will. With respect to its mere form, volition is called *pure volition*. Yet because the empirical is to be determined by the pure, the moral law postulates *pure volition* itself as the object of volition.

1,430 The object of volition, however, shall always be demonstrable only through the act of volition [*aus dem Wollen*]. If, then, I strive for nothing but the absolute Good, i.e., pure volition itself, this latter, being the material of my volition, shall always be demonstrable only *through* an act of will, i.e., through a *positive* act whereby it has become the object of volition.

Of this positive act I shall become *conscious*, for it is self-consciousness that we are in search of. However, we are never conscious of something *positive* except through an opposing positive [factor] (which, in this respect, is the *negation* of the first one). We consider this proposition to have been proven by theoretical philosophy.¹

¹Some excellent remarks on this statement, grounded in the depth of human nature, can be found in Kant's treatise: "Attempt at Introducing the Concept of Negative Quantities into the World-Wisdom."⁵⁴

Hence we cannot become conscious of an act wherein the material of volition is determined exclusively by pure volition itself unless the opposed act—where, in turn, volition is determined by the substratum (and where pure volition has been sublated entirely)—opposes us *positively* and as [something] *real*. That is, we cannot conceive of a positive moral act without opposing it with a positively immoral one.

This opposition must be *real*, i.e., both activities must appear equally *possible* to [our] consciousness. That one or the other be *excluded* must be explained through a positive act of volition.

This consciousness of a real opposition, i.e., of *equally possible* activities, then, turns volition into a *spontaneity* [*Willkür*],^u and thus our philosophy enables us to reconcile the conflict that seems to take place in the pronouncements of two famous philosophers on this matter.⁵⁵

(1) In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant claims that the will and practical, i.e., legislating, *reason* are the same, and he reiterates this position in his *Philosophy of Right*.⁵⁶ Reinhold argues that the morality and moral competence of our actions is conceivable only if we postulate a *freedom of will* that differs from both, the autonomy of *reason* and the striving of *desire*.

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The issue is this: by *reason* we designate primordially only the faculty of *ideas*, and to that extent it has a strictly *theoretical* significance. Accordingly, *practical reason* would seem to be something of a self-contradiction. However, no faculty of *ideas* could ever exist in us without *freedom*; our thinking could not strive beyond reality without being *primordially* free. Conversely, we could never become conscious of freedom and of our striving beyond reality if we were not capable of creating objects for ourselves where they can no longer be [empirically] found. Meanwhile, the object of freedom is *infinite*, and it can be realized only in an infinite progress, i.e., in an empirical manner; hence it shall indeed be realized *empirically*, i.e., through experience.

Now, because in experience the *concept* of the object *precedes* the *object* itself (rather than originating *together with* the object, as is the case in theoretical cognition), and because, furthermore, everything that we *reflect* as an *object* (of cognition or of production) must be finite, the *imagination* here assists *freedom* by creating *ideas* of what freedom is to realize in such a manner that these ideas are capable of an infinite expansion. For we would have to cease to be productive in an absolute sense if, at some point, the *object* of these [ideas] had been attained.

The *imagination*, then, at the service of *practical reason* is the faculty of *ideas*, also called *theoretical reason*. <Enthusiasm differs from reason in that the former is an unbridled fantasy, whereas the imagination *presently* under discus-

^uSpontaneity is necessary for the possibility of representing our free acting, and it thereby pertains only to the *appearance* of the will, not to the will itself.

1,432 sion remains within the limits of moral postulates; the former produces *chimeras* whereas the latter [produces] *ideas*.> Because theoretical reason cannot produce ideas unless our inherent freedom grants such reason access to infinity, this infinity, in turn, cannot become the object of freedom unless it is being *limited* by the *ideas*, i.e., by reason into infinity.

Hence our freedom presupposes reason (as a faculty of ideas) and, conversely, our reason presupposes freedom.

Consequently, with freedom being no more conceivable without reason than reason without freedom, the latter can also be called *practical reason*: reason [we call it] because the *ideas* are its *immediate* object, and *practical* [it is called] because these ideas are not objects of cognition but objects of an *activity*. Likewise, reason as the faculty of ideas—notwithstanding that its function herein is merely theoretical—can be called *practical reason* insofar as its ideas are objects to be realized by freedom: [it is] *reason* because its function in the production of ideas is merely theoretical, and [it is] *practical* reason, because these ideas <and not certain chimeras or vain speculations,> are objects of a necessary activity.

Thus *practical reason* is one with freedom, i.e., with the will (according to Kant); all laws proceed from a practical reason thus understood, and the primordial autonomy of the will finds its expression in the moral law. The moral law, however, is far from being a lifeless proposition that *rests* within us a priori, nor [is it] a proposition that can be established *theoretically*; it exists within us only to the extent that the will *expresses* it in us (empirically). It becomes manifest in *act* and *deed*, and it is only to that extent that we *know* of it; <otherwise it is merely deposited in your memory or has been written down in black on white in your notebooks.> Its source is the will. For the [law] constitutes a state of which we cannot become conscious except through the *act of will itself*.

1,433 However, to the extent that this law—which originates in the will and becomes initially manifest only through act and deed—can be *apprehended and expressed in words* by our theoretical reason, its function is strictly theoretical and analogous to the function of the understanding, to be sure, which is also an abstraction and a conceptual representation of the spirit's primordial activity in intuition. Just as we explicate *primordial representation* in concepts, without therefore conflating these concepts with this primordial representation itself, we can also comprehend the *primordial* "ought" [*Sollen*] (whose ground must lie in knowledge itself) without confusing this *derivative* "ought" with the *primordial* one, and without [confusing] the mere *organ*, through which the law speaks to us, with the *source* of the law itself.

Hence both (Kant and Reinhold) are right; the *will legislates* (according to Kant), [and] *reason expresses* these laws (according to Reinhold). When Kant states that the will in no way differs from practical reason itself, it seems more natural to reverse this pronouncement: practical reason (the legislating

[faculty] in us) is the will itself; for everybody is conscious of a practical reason that governs us by law, though not of the primordial will whose voice reaches us only through the medium of reason. Meanwhile, Reinhold's claim that, in general, laws *originate* only in *reason* and that the moral law be the postulate that reason as such directs at the will is fundamentally wrong and erodes any autonomy of the will. For reason (initially a merely theoretical faculty) becomes *practical* only by articulating the material of a superior will. In and of itself, it holds no authority or moral claim over us; whatever it pronounces as a law is valid only to the extent that it has been sanctioned by the absolute will. If, therefore (according to Reinhold), there is no absolute will in whose name reason speaks to us and wherein all laws *originate*, then reason, in giving us laws, is a merely theoretical faculty (something Reinhold seems to admit when stating (on p. 383) that the precepts of reason are in and of themselves strictly *theoretical*); for this faculty becomes *practical* not spontaneously but only by virtue of a higher authority in whose name it speaks. Thus it is a *theoretical* faculty that, rather than being determined by the will, determines the will itself and thus grants us autonomy only in the form of semblance and rhetoric. This, however, Reinhold cannot accept. The following [remarks] shall elucidate how, notwithstanding the preceding [objections], he could arrive at the earlier proposition, (namely, that all laws *originate* in reason).

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(2) Kant claims:

Laws emerge from the *will*, and maxims from *spontaneity*. The latter is a *free* spontaneity in man; the will, which is directed at nothing else but the law, *can be called neither free nor unfree*, for it is directed not at *acts* but immediately at the *legislature* for the maxims of the acts, and thus it proves strictly necessary and incapable of any coercion. The freedom of spontaneity, however, cannot be *defined as the ability to opt for or against the law*, as indeed some have attempted to [define] it, even though spontaneity as a *phenomenon* frequently offers examples of this in experience. Despite the fact that *experience* reveals the capacity of man as a *sensible being* to act both in accordance with and in violation of the law, we still realize that his freedom cannot, therefore, be defined as *intelligible in essence*; for neither can *appearances* serve to explain any *supersensible object* (such as the freedom of spontaneity), [nor] can freedom possibly be understood as the [capacity] of a subject to make its choices also against its own legislating reason, even though experience shows frequently enough that it happens, without our being able to comprehend how it is possible.⁵⁷

To this Reinhold objects that human spontaneity is a *peculiar* [*eigenthümlich*] faculty of the will, and that, rather than the law originating in the will, the latter is directed *at* the law, though only here and *insofar* as (to

use Kant's words) it subsumes the [law] under its maxim. Of all this the will is capable only to the extent that the law, *in and of itself*, is not its maxim and, consequently, does not *originate* in the will. [According to Reinhold,] the will does not cease to be when it is not directed at the law, for in doing so it once again proves itself as will. It would not be a will if it was unfree, i.e., if it lacked a choice between *good* and *evil*.⁵⁸

1,435 Here, then, we have such a contradiction of claims as should be considered impossible in these matters. The reason for this contradiction will most likely be found in the *object* itself. When Kant claims that the will is inherently neither free nor unfree, hence neither good nor evil, and by contrast, when Reinhold argues that the will *as such* could not be anything but *free* and that it is a will only insofar as it could be good or evil, it is apparent that each speaks of a different kind of will. The question arises as to whether the *object* (the will) itself might not admit of such a dual perspective.

When A claims that the will as such is neither free nor unfree, whereas B refers to [our] ordinary consciousness where spontaneity (i.e., the *freedom* to choose) exists as a faculty *peculiar* to the will, then A clearly considers the will *insofar as it is not at all the object of consciousness* whereas B speaks of the will *insofar as it is manifest for consciousness*. The former rises above the standpoint of ordinary consciousness whereas the latter remains on this [standpoint]. The former has the advantage that he can prove to the latter from *principles* that the will—insofar as it *appears*, i.e., seen from the standpoint of consciousness—would have to appear as free spontaneity, even though this faculty is not at all conceivable in the *absolute* will (which alone legislates); the latter has no alternative but to refer to the judgment of the ordinary, practical understanding that he himself cannot explain any further; he cannot, however, explain how A could make a claim that seems to contradict ordinary consciousness; thus he cannot remain at ease with his own explanations of claims so contradictory to his own.

The example is peculiar, because it demonstrates how difficult it is to agree on questions, even when they concern the most universal issue of morality, unless agreement has been reached regarding a common standpoint. This standpoint, meanwhile, is nothing subordinate but must necessarily be supreme.

1,436 Hence, as *appearance*, the will must necessarily appear as *spontaneity*. This and no more B is able to prove, and precisely this is what A also claims. However, it is the salient characteristic of the finite spirit to *appear for itself* into infinity, to become its *own object*, [and] to *become empirical for itself*. This necessity (to become its own object) is all that intervenes between us and *infinity*. Consequently, all that lies *beyond* this *necessity* we share with the infinite itself or, to the extent that we are empirical, it appears for us as lying in infinity. Meanwhile, our will is an act that *in and of itself* is anything but *empirical*. This both A and B claim. hence, for us, our will lies in infinity, [and]

it defies every empirical explanation; the will can always be explained only through the will.

Nevertheless, the will *shall* become appearance, because the purpose of the moral law is as follows: the Self is to present itself into infinity in the external world; this task, however, cannot be carried out unless the Self becomes conscious of itself, namely, in the will.

Still, the Self is to become conscious of its will as an *absolute* one. This is possible only in a negative [sense], i.e., it shall become conscious of itself as *not* being determined by any sensuous impulse. As we saw earlier, this is not possible without a *positive opposition* between the sensuous impulses and that which the will, as a pure will, prescribes. Precisely because, and only insofar as, there obtains this positive opposition, is it possible to be driven to an *absolute will* by consciousness itself. Because this opposition is positive, both *opposita* should have to cancel on another, the result thus being = 0. However, because an act takes place whose ground we can neither locate in the *moral law*, to the extent that the latter exists in consciousness, nor in the *sensuous impulses*, because both of these have been posited as *equals*, we cannot explain, from the standpoint of consciousness, the origins of a [given] act any further *than by postulating a free choice* that we call *spontaneity* [Willkür]. Yet precisely this was our goal; the problem was to make intelligible the *consciousness of freedom* (to construct [it] as it were). This we accomplish with the concept of *spontaneity* that we may therefore legitimately characterize as the *phenomenon of the will*.

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However, because the will qua spontaneity is mere appearance, the latter is in no way attributable to the will *to the extent that the will does not appear*; nor can it be presented as a peculiar faculty of the [will], as is done by B [Reinhold], and A [Kant] is quite justified in claiming that the will as such is neither free nor unfree, because it aims merely at the law while being strictly necessary and incapable of any coercion.

Already some time ago, the author of the present essay deduced this very claim from principles that have recently been endorsed by Mr. Reinhold. Hence it would seem all the more justified to compare Reinhold's previous explanation of this issue with Kant's own, because thereby his [Reinhold's] presentation will undoubtedly gain in distinctness. "The problem of transcendental freedom," he used to argue earlier, "has always had the deplorable fate of being misunderstood and reconsidered again and again. Indeed, even after having been considerably illuminated by the *Critique of [Practical] Reason*, the proper point of disagreement remains still inadequately defined. The proper conflict never concerned the possibility of an *absolute freedom*, for the *very concept* of an absolute already excludes any determination by a foreign causality; *absolute freedom* is nothing but the absolute determination of the unconditional by the mere *laws (of nature) of its own being*."⁵⁹ {This is exactly what Kant says: the will, *insofar* as it is not *appearance*, i.e., to the extent that it is

1,438 free not in a *transcendental* but in an *absolute* sense, aims at nothing but the *law*, and to that extent it can neither be called *free* nor *unfree*; that is, the law that emerges from it is a mere *natural law* for the absolute will whereby the latter expresses nothing but *itself*. Kant merely forgot to note that, *to that extent*, the law of the absolute will is not the *moral law* either. Reinhold asks: did Kant not conceive the concept of the moral law too broadly, because he accorded it *the same scope* as he accorded to the law of *practical reason* (in our terminology: the law of the absolute will)? “Certainly!” For what Reinhold calls the law of practical reason, [and] what we call the law of the absolute will, only *becomes* the moral law in *consciousness*, in positive opposition to the sensuous impulses, [and] as the object of the free choice of spontaneity, i.e., of the will in its appearance.” The absolute freedom of will can thus be characterized as: “Independence of all laws that do not spring from its own essence, of all (moral) laws that would posit something in it which had not already been posited by virtue of its own being, through its being posited as such.”⁶⁰ Such laws are the *moral laws*. For these are *directed* at a will of which it is impossible to predict whether it will abide by these [laws]. By contrast, the primordial law (which becomes a moral law only in consciousness) is not directed at, but *originates* in a will *that is its own law* and, to that extent, is neither *free* nor *unfree* (in the moral sense) but is free in an *absolute* sense.

1,439 From this it follows what was then claimed as well, namely, that the absolute in us alone does not yet explain *transcendental* freedom. “What is incomprehensible is not how an absolute, but how an *empirical* self should possess freedom, not how an intellectual self should be intellectual, i.e., free in an absolute sense, but how it is possible that an *empirical* self could be simultaneously *intellectual*, i.e., possess a causality through freedom.”⁶¹ For, if we were to consider the empirical in us to be completely determined by the intellectual, we could never comprehend the possibility of the [phenomenon of] *spontaneity* within us. Kant admits as much when stating that freedom could never be grounded in the capacity of a rational subject to make a choice that interferes with its own legislating reason, even though experience offers frequent proof of precisely this happening; [it is a situation] *whose conditions of possibility we cannot possibly understand*. Conversely, if we were to claim that the empirical in us be *in no respect* determined by the intellectual, we could not understand the possibility of our own, *free* spontaneity.

Hence, to explain free spontaneity (as a fact of ordinary consciousness) the idea of absolute freedom is a requisite; *without* it we cannot comprehend the *freedom* of choice whereas with it alone we cannot comprehend how *any*

⁶⁰To this extent it is also true, then, that the law (as a moral law) derives from *reason*; for it only arrives at *consciousness* through the medium of reason, and *outside* of consciousness it is not a moral but a natural law of the will.

other choice should be possible for us, nor why the primordial [moral] law within us has not become a necessity.

Here, then, we should recall that spontaneity, that is, the freedom of self-determination for or against the law, belongs only to [the order of] *appearance*, and that consequently we must not employ its concept for determining or defining the supersensible in us. It must be demonstrated that we cannot become *conscious* of the supersensible in us (i.e., freedom) except through *spontaneity* that, although it is not part of the supersensible in us, is an integral aspect of our finitude, i.e., of our *consciousness* of the supersensible.

If we are to become finite for ourselves, it will be equally necessary that the absolute freedom in us appear as spontaneity. By belonging to our finitude and, to that extent, to the order of appearance, [spontaneity] does not immediately become mere *semblance* [*Schein*];* for it belongs to the necessary limits of our nature, beyond which we strive into infinity without, however, being able to sublimate them entirely; and thus this moment in practical philosophy, however obscure it might seem otherwise, reflects back onto our theoretical idealism a new light whose significance we are only now capable of appreciating. For we can now determine, as it were, the transcendental region from where the intellectual makes its transition into the empirical. Along with that one act whereby the absolute in us becomes its own object (i.e., freedom [becoming] spontaneity) there also unfolds an entire system of finite representations, and along with it the profound feeling of our moral finitude by which alone we are *assimilated* to the external world as the *sphere* of our finitude. We understand the tendency toward the infinite that keeps our spirit in constant unrest; for finitude is not our *primordial* state, and it could never exist *autonomously*. We have *become* finite, and how could we ever hope to overcome this finitude in a *moral* sense if it had not also originated *in a moral sense*? It is our own finitude that renders the world finite for us; already we sense, however, that the [world] becomes *infinite* through us and for ourselves, and that an expanded world will open itself to an expanded intellect <and that ever new planets will mark the path toward infinity>.

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The following propositions summarize the points on which we have reached agreement thus far:

*[No more does spontaneity prove to be mere semblance] than the entire history of our species, which also applies only to finitude. It begins with the Fall, i.e., with the first spontaneous act, and it ends with the empire of reason, i.e., when all spontaneity will vanish from earth.

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1. The law originates in the absolute will. The will, to the extent that it is legislating [and] absolute, can be called neither free nor unfree, for it only expresses itself in the law.
2. Without an absolute, legislating will, freedom would be a chimera. However, we do not become *conscious* of freedom in any other way than through *spontaneity*, i.e., through the free choice between opposing maxims that are mutually exclusive and cannot coexist in the same will.
3. The law of the absolute will, to the extent that it is to become a maxim, reaches spontaneity through reason. Reason is not the supersensible itself but its expression in us.
4. Spontaneity, as the appearance of the absolute will, differs from the latter not in *principle* but only according to its *limits* in that it is being counteracted by a positively opposing will. Spontaneity can thus be explained as *the absolute will within the limits of finitude*.
5. If the absolute (pure) will was not *limited* by an opposing one, it could never become *conscious* of itself, i.e., of its freedom; conversely, if the *empirical* will (of which we become conscious) were to differ from the absolute will not only with regard to its *limits* but also with regard to its *principle*, there would once again exist no consciousness of freedom in our empirical will.
6. From the standpoint of consciousness, the freedom of will consists in spontaneity, whereby we sometimes integrate the law and, on other occasions, its opposing principle into our maxim; and precisely this impossibility to represent the absolute will for ourselves in any other way constitutes the ground of all finitude.
7. Yet the supersensible in us cannot be defined through this concept of spontaneity, because the latter belongs merely to the form and manner in which we are represented by and for ourselves.

* * *

Reinhold contests proposition 1, because he remains on the standpoint of consciousness and does not ascend to [the order of] the absolute will. Proposition 2 Reinhold postulates, as Kant had done long before him. In the *Philosophy of Religion* he expressly states that the moral law is the driving factor of spontaneity, hence something positive = *a*.⁶² Consequently, the lack of conformity between the spontaneity and the law (= 0) could be explained only as a consequence of a real opposition, i.e., an *evil spontaneity*, that determines spontaneity itself. Both thinkers disagree with regard to proposition 3, for they associate different concepts with the word *reason*. Proposition 4 I have otherwise expressed as follows:

that the causality of the empirical 'I' is a causality *by means of freedom* is due to the *identity* between [this] causality and the *absolute* causality; that is *transcendental* freedom it owes strictly to its *finitude* (better yet, the transcendental is that which mediates the empirical or sensible in us with the absolute or supersensible.)⁶³

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[Transcendental freedom] is thus *absolute* freedom with regard to the principle from which it proceeds, and only by reaching its limits does it become *transcendental*, i.e., the freedom of an empirical self. Kant never accepts this mediation of the sensible and the supersensible by the transcendental will; Reinhold, too, claims exactly the same:

it would not occur to me to attempt a definition of the freedom of man as an *intelligible* being (through spontaneity?). I am merely concerned with the freedom of the *human* will; for me, man is neither an *intelligible* nor a *sensible* being but both of these together, and I merely consider him free because and insofar as he is both of these simultaneously, whereas Kant seems to consider man free only insofar as he is an intelligible being.

([Kant] not only *seems* to, but effectively *does* consider [man this way] and, indeed, does so from his point of view with good reason). The will is *free* only to the extent that man is *intellectual*, yet this freedom becomes *transcendental* (and Reinhold does not seem to know of a higher [freedom]) only to the extent that man is simultaneously sensible. "The subject of the transcendental faculties is simultaneously the subject of the empirical ones, if this faculty is to be not *transcendent* but *transcendental*, i.e., relating to the empirical a priori." This explanation affirms in straightforward manner what proposition 5 has already asserted. In light of what has been observed thus far, it follows that both philosophers agree on the last two propositions.

* * *

I refrain from elaborating a variety of conclusions that might be drawn, now that this seeming contradiction regarding an issue so pertinent to humanity has been resolved; [they are] conclusions regarding the necessity of a philosophical principle that lies *outside of consciousness*. These conclusions are readily apparent to each of us. I will merely say this much: a philosophy whose first principle it is to evoke for *consciousness* the *spiritual* in man, i.e., that which lies *beyond* consciousness, must necessarily prove quite incomprehensible for those who have not rehearsed and strengthened this spiritual consciousness, or who can present for themselves even the most sublime aspects of their [soul] only in the form of lifeless *concepts* devoid of all intuition. The immediate, which exists in everyone and whose primordial intuition (which

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also exists in everyone, though they may not always be conscious of it) conditions the certainty of all our knowledge and can never become comprehensible for anyone through mere words. The medium through which spirits communicate with one another is not the surrounding air but the communal freedom whose reverberations extend to the innermost regions of the soul. Wherever man's spirit is not *imbued* with the consciousness of freedom, all spiritual communication, not only with others but even with *his own self*, is interrupted; no wonder, then, that the spirit remains as incomprehensible for itself as it is for others, and that in its dreadful solitude it merely exhausts itself with vain *words* that remain unanswered by any sympathetic resonance (be it from its own or from another's bosom).

To remain incomprehensible to such a person is nothing short of a blessing and an honor before God and man <*Barbarus huic ego sim, nec tali intelligar ulli*, a wish and prayer that we cannot possibly avoid>.⁶⁴

The history of philosophy offers examples of systems that remained a riddle throughout several epochs. A recent philosophy whose principles are rumored to solve all extant riddles comments on Leibniz that he was probably the only one with genuine conviction in the entire history of philosophy, hence the only one to be *fundamentally* right.⁶⁵ This statement deserves our attention, for it suggests that the time has come to understand Leibniz. For surely he must not be understood as he has been understood *thus far*, if indeed he is to be proven *fundamentally* right. This issue, however, deserves closer examination elsewhere.

Appendix to the Preceding Treatise On Postulates in Philosophy

1,444 For some time I have been looking for an opportunity to comment on this issue. In what follows, I will address some aspects of this matter, whereas the remainder will have to be taken up elsewhere.

The expression *postulate* is borrowed from mathematics. In geometry, the *most primordial* construction is not *demonstrated* but *postulated*. This *most primordial* (simplest) construction in space is the *extended point* or the *straight line*. Still, it remains unclear as to whether the point is being extended in one direction or whether it constantly changes its direction. <The *original straight line* is *unlimited*, or it is the *infinity of space* itself wherein, insofar as it is unlimited, we can conceive of no direction whatsoever.> If the *direction* of the point is determined, this is done either by a point *outside of it*, in which case we have the *straight line* (which does not *enclose* any space), or the *direction* of the point is *not* determined by any outside point of reference, in which case the line must *double back on itself* thereby leaving us with a *circle* (which indeed encloses a space). If the straight line is understood as *positive*, the circle

is the *negation* of the straight, i.e., a line that does not convert into a *straight* at any point, but that instead changes its direction constantly. However, if we understand the *primordial line* as *unlimited* and the straight as *categorically limited*, the circle will be the *third* one composed of both; it is unlimited and limited at the same time: *unlimited* by any point outside of it [and] *limited* by itself.

Mathematics thus offers philosophy the example of a *primordial intuition* from which every science must proceed that wants to make a claim for *evidence*. It does not proceed from a demonstrable *principle* but from what is *undemonstrable* and *primordially intuitable* [*dem Undemonstrierbaren, ursprünglich Anzuschauenden*]. However, a significant difference quickly emerges at this point. Philosophy is concerned with the objects of the *inner sense*, and unlike mathematics, it cannot provide each construction with a corresponding, external intuition. Yet philosophy, if it is to achieve evidence, must proceed from the most primordial construction; the question, then, arises as to what th[is] most primordial construction *for the inner sense* might be.

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The answer to this question depends on the direction that is offered to the inner sense. In philosophy, however, the *direction* of the inner sense cannot possibly be determined by an *external* object. I may be *coerced* to construct in a primordial sense the *straight line* by the line that is drawn on paper or on a board. Naturally, such a line is not the *straight line itself* but only its *image*; it affords us no knowledge of the straight line itself but, conversely, we compare this straight line on the blackboard to the primordial line (in the imagination); otherwise we could not abstract its width, diameter, etc. Nevertheless, this line is the sensible image of the primordial line and a means of producing this primordial intuition in everyone.

The question now becomes whether philosophy has some means of determining the direction of the inner sense in the same manner as it can be determined in mathematics by means of an outward presentation. For the direction of the inner sense is exclusively determined by freedom. The consciousness of some only extends to the pleasant or unpleasant sensations that are caused by external impressions; others extend their inner sense to the consciousness of intuition; yet others will become conscious not only of the intuition but also of the concept; finally, some may develop the concept of the concept; and thus we may rightfully claim that some possess more of an inner sense than others. Such quantitative difference already indicates that philosophy must possess a practical component in its very first principles, whereas no such [component] exists in mathematics. Socrates (in [the text of] Plato) shows that even a slave can be instructed in complicated geometrical demonstrations by drawing the figures in the sand.⁶⁶ The Kantians, too, might commission an etching that would depict the origin of representation, similar to what some Cartesians had once attempted,⁶⁷ yet no one has tried it, and it

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would be to no avail. To an Eskimo or a South American, even our most popular philosophies would have to seem altogether incomprehensible. He does not even have enough sense *for those*. [Likewise,] some among us who consider themselves philosophers, are completely devoid of the organ of philosophy; philosophy for them seems but a phantasm, just as the deaf—if they did not know or believe that other people had an additional sense—would have to consider the most ingenious theory of music but a vain conceptual play, a play of internal coherence, to be sure, yet *fundamentally* devoid of all reality.

Hence philosophy will contain just as many principles as there exist degrees of the inner power of intuition; a first one will consider representation, a second one the primordial synthesis in the categories, a third one, finally <a sensitive and noble genius>, will conceive of the highest good as the true principle of philosophy. Nothing is being accomplished with all this. There must exist something absolutely compulsory for the inner sense. Nothing is compulsory for the inner sense except for the *ought* [*das Sollen*] itself. The postulate from which philosophy proceeds will therefore require an object of which everyone at least *ought* to be conscious, even if he is not. For the latter one must demonstrate that, if he was unable to become conscious of this object, the primordial *ought* would also remain entirely incomprehensible to him.

Thus it becomes once again apparent what the preceding treatise has already demonstrated from another perspective, namely, that the first principle of philosophy must be *simultaneously theoretical and practical*, i.e., a *postulate*. For if we posit the following:

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Either the principle of philosophy is merely a theoretical one, that is, a *doctrinal proposition* (a proposition predicating an existence [*Dasein*], in which case such a principle leads inexorably to dogmatism. Yet a science that is *transcendental* by nature must exclude all *empiricism* with its very first principle. An example can be found in geometry, which *postulates* the most primordial construction and thus alerts the student from the outset to the fact *that throughout this science he will be concerned only with his own constructions*. This line, the object of this primordial construction, *exists nowhere outside of this construction but is only this construction itself*. The same is to be the case in philosophy; the student must be *immersed*, so to speak, in the transcendental method. Hence the first principle must already by *his own construction*, which is *required* of (and left to) him, for him to learn at the outset that whatever originates for him by means of this construction is *nothing outside of it*, and that it *exists only to the extent that he constructs*. The revolution lately experienced by philosophy as a result of the introduction of transcendental principles has brought this science closer to mathematics; the method that it follows from here on is none other than the one that mathematics has already been applying so successfully; namely, to concern itself exclusively

with primordial constructions, and to treat a factual proposition [*Realsatz*] not in an analytical but rather in a synthetic manner (as having its *origin* in a synthesis); to reconceive things as mere appearances is a truly *mathematical* procedure, and it can indeed be demonstrated that, and also to what extent, philosophy is capable of mathematical evidence; it possesses evidence for anyone who has the talent for it (and who does not lack the inner capacity for construction), analogous to mathematics, which does not become intelligible through figures etched onto copper or through plain inspection, but through an inner organ (the imagination).

Alternatively, if we posited strictly *practical* principle of philosophy, it would no longer be a postulate but an *imperative*. A practical postulate is a contradiction in itself. In ethics, to the extent that it is a *formal* [discipline], there exist only *precepts* [*Gebote*]; however, when applied to experience, they become *tasks* [*Aufgaben*], though *necessary tasks* that everyone shall solve to the best of his abilities.

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Hence, if the principle of philosophy can be neither theoretical nor practical alone, it must be *both* at once. It is in the concept of the *postulate* that the two are united, a concept that is *theoretical* in that it requires a primordial construction, [and] *practical* because (as a postulate of philosophy) it can borrow its compulsory force (for the inner sense) only from practical philosophy. Thus the principle of philosophy is of necessity a *postulate*.

If, consequently, we raise the question concerning the object of this [postulate], the answer will be: *the most primordial construction for the inner sense*. In fact, the object of the inner sense is generally the self as thought, representation, volition, etc. The most primordial construction for the inner sense would thus have to be one by virtue of which the 'I' *itself first originates*. (Kant says: the *analytical* unity of self-consciousness must be preceded by a *synthetic* [unity].⁶⁸ It is precisely this [unity] that we are discussing here. This proposition has still not been adequately explained, although it contains the core of the Kantian philosophy.) The postulate of philosophy, then, is none other than this: to have a *primordial* intuition of ourselves—not as thinking or willing beings—but *primordially in [our] first moment or origination*; and nothing else can be the intention of Mr. Beck, whose postulate of a primordial representation, if it is not to prove completely vacuous, can mean only this: to become conscious of yourself in your primordial activity!

Thus, by virtue of this primordial construction, the philosopher obtains indeed a product (the self); however, this product exists nowhere *outside* of this construction, just as the straight line postulated by geometry exists only to the extent that it is *primordially* constructed and is *nothing outside* of this construction. A crucial difference remains, however; namely, the self in its primordial act is not only the *construct* but is itself *constructing*, thus becoming precisely the self, i.e., becoming a principle superior to everything objective.—Here, then, we have deduced the *analytical* unity of self-consciousness

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(I = I) from the *synthetic* one that precedes it, which means nothing less than that we have deduced how the *self* is *primordially its own construction*. Thus the proposition: I = I, as it is usually understood, is not even the *principle* of philosophy.

However, to the extent that a product (the self) does indeed emerge from this construction, the *origination of this product* can also be expressed in a proposition [*Grundsatz*] (e.g., I am). Thus our most recent philosophers speak of a *supreme proposition for all philosophy*, though to posit as its principle a proposition predicating an *existence* is diametrically opposed to the very spirit of philosophy. To have distinguished between an *absolute being* [*Sein*] and *existence* [*Dasein*] was of little help because the majority conceived of the former as a *thing in itself*, notwithstanding the most vigorous protest.

To speak of a supreme proposition of philosophy was good only as long as it did not occasion any misunderstanding. Yet when the self-proclaimed judges of this philosophy understood this proposition as *analytical* and pronounced it self-evident and free of all synthesis (or content), it seemed timely to inform them that *for them* that proposition functioned as a *postulate* whose meaning and content could not be understood except by means of the *primordial construction* (synthesis) being expressed in it. And yet, this was precisely what happened. All public reviews assured almost unanimously that this proposition, which was to be placed at the beginning of philosophy, was completely *devoid of any content*. Some people, at whose hands all philosophical wisdom is certain to perish some day, sought to overturn this philosophy with the *naive* question as to what this self that was being spoken of actually was; this [critical] philosophy should first of all explain this [self], etc. "You clever people," one should have answered; "when geometry postulates a straight line, does it really explain what the line is? Why, then, should we postulate it?" This is precisely what it seeks, namely, for you to experience what the straight line is *by constructing* it. The same [is the case] with our philosophy. We postulate the self. Concerning the question "What is this [self]?" we urge you to answer it *for yourselves*. The answer is *the 'I' itself*, which shall *originate in you*, and which shall be constructed *by you*. It does not exist somewhere outside of you so that we may point it out. By virtue of constructing it you will *know* it, for it is nothing but your construct. If not with these then with similar words I shall answer the critic who understood even this proposition as a skein of which philosophy would eventually be stripped <or as the body of a spider from which the threads of this new texture should emerge analytically>. ⁶⁹ This came as no surprise, if we consider some of the ideas that had been disseminated regarding the nature of a philosophical principle. This [critic] also explained openheartedly that, for him, the self was altogether nothing, which I have no trouble believing. I replied that we were not talking about Reinhold's proposition, namely, that philosophy shall *not* proceed from *any* proposition whatsoever; for you, as someone seeking to

evaluate it, this principle is a postulate that you cannot understand simply by beholding it, impassively, black on white. You cannot develop an understanding of the straight line by means of the mark on the blackboard but, on the contrary, you understand this mark by means of the straight line. Thus you learn what the self is by way of the proposition but, conversely, the self in you must reveal for you the significance of the proposition, etc. To amuse the reader, I should tell him about the subsequent fate of this insignificant explanation (of an issue that is really quite self-evident). Some good friends congratulated me on having left the arid plains of speculation <thinking, no doubt, that I would henceforth sow on the well-irrigated pastures of *their* moral philosophy>. Recently, someone else has expressed the greatest astonishment about this attempt (to establish the principle of philosophy in the form of a *postulate*), not because this is fantastic in and of itself, but because the author in question is a *friend of the Science of Knowledge*.^x Does the literalist practice already extend this far? Moreover, this credible witness could no doubt learn from the author of the *Science of Knowledge* himself that, when speaking of a supreme proposition in philosophy, he never meant anything but a *postulate*.^z <This I know, for indeed it *must be* [understood in] this, and *cannot* be [understood in] any other, way.^y

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Shall I guess how the misconception arose? Our dear friends have read Kant on the postulates of *practical reason*.⁷² For them, there are no other ones. We can only hope that they will not happen upon Euclid one day, for otherwise they might try to prove that he already grounded geometry in the *primacy of practical reason*. Regarding the postulates of practical reason, I suppose that they will have played their role in philosophy for the longest time. A *postulate* is the requisite of a *primordial* (transcendental) construction. However, God and immortality are not *objects* of a *primordial* construction. In practical philosophy, there exist merely *precepts* [Gebote]. Insofar as their object is infinite and shall be realized in an *empirical* infinitude and under *empirical* conditions, these [precepts] become *tasks*, indeed *infinite tasks*. To call them, therefore, *postulates* is hardly any better than referring to infinite tasks in mathematics with that name. In mathematics, each irrational number really refers to nothing but the task of approximating this number *into infinity*. Yet to deny, therefore, that, for example, $\sqrt{3}$ be a real number is contradictory; it is merely a number that lies in infinity. Likewise, in philosophy God and immortality involve infinite tasks. To dispute all their reality, however merely because

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^x[I am referring to] the anonymous author of the Apology that can be found in volume 7 of the *Philosophical Journal*.⁷⁰

^yBecause for me the postulate is exactly the same as what the apologist understands by a principle that shall be *simultaneously theoretical and practical* (see my remarks on this matter in the preceding essay), the reason for his taking exception can only be that he has not read the word *postulate* in [Fichte's] *Science of Knowledge*.⁷¹

their object is not attainable at *any* time (and because it cannot be measured with any part or whole of a given parameter) is inconsistent; for certainly this object exists in time, albeit in an *infinite* time, and every possible present must be considered to belong to this infinity itself. Whatever is rational in these infinite quantities, i.e., what we can understand (measure) of them lies in every present; whatever is irrational about them (thus not belonging to the present employment of reason), lies in infinity.

**System of Philosophy in General
and of the
Philosophy of Nature in Particular
(1804, based on posthumous manuscripts)**

Note on the Text

The text translated here constitutes the first part of Schelling's 1804 lectures at Würzburg. Schelling's brief period of lecturing activities at Würzburg (1803–1806) was compromised by a less sophisticated audience than he had enjoyed at Jena, as well as troubled and, at times, virtually brought to a halt by the intense and protracted academic and political quarrels with colleagues and members of the Catholic clergy—which dominated the administrative and curricular governance of the university at Würzburg, and which clearly did not favor the appointment of the Protestant Schelling. Other distractions and interruptions were caused by a series of projects carried out simultaneously, albeit with little success or hope for their longevity (among them Schelling's plan, never realized, to establish a *Yearbook for Medical Science* [*Jahrbücher der Medizin*] and by estrangements from former friends. For a detailed account of Schelling's intellectual and private life during his years at Würzburg, see *Briefe und Dokumente*, vol. I, pp. 279–347.

Meanwhile, Schelling continued to develop his System of Identity (*Identitätssystem*), which had become the focal point of his philosophical concerns since 1801 and which he continued to develop in various texts between 1801 and 1804. The present lectures, culled from his posthumous manuscripts by his son, Karl Friedrich Anton Schelling, are widely considered to be Schelling's most definitive and lucid presentation of his conception of identity and of the possibility and internal logic of a philosophical "system" in general. Notwithstanding their epigrammatic style and their densely, almost compulsively organized appearance—a format Schelling had begun to cultivate as early as 1801, e.g., in his *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie*—these lectures, presented by Schelling during the winter semester of 1803–1804 (see *Briefe*, vol. I, p. 301), constitute Schelling's only fully developed formulation of the

so-called Ideal Part of his *Identitätssystem*, his “philosophy of spirit.” The text of the 1804 lectures was not published until after Schelling’s death.

The second part of these lectures, which comprises a revised and updated presentation of Schelling’s philosophy of nature, has not been translated here because that part largely reproduces materials already available to an English audience in the very fine, recent translation of Schelling’s 1797 *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* as well as in the recent, partial translations of Schelling’s 1805 “Aphorisms.” Still, these two texts ought to be consulted by any reader who wishes to develop a sense of the complementary relation that Schelling envisioned between his “general” and “particular” philosophies. The inserted pagination once again follows K. F. A. Schelling’s *Sämmtliche Werke*.

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I. First Part or Philosophy in General

However different its manifestation in each individual subject, the first impulse for philosophy involves fundamentally only one presupposition that can be exacted of us solely through a reflection on *knowledge itself*. To endow this presupposition with its own *reality*, to explore its full significance, and to present it from all angles as *true*, all these together define, properly speaking, the subjective and concealed motivation [*Impuls*] of philosophy in general. Whenever this presupposition fails to come to life in a given person, be it through himself or through others, this [person] will not even touch the realm of philosophy but, instead, will completely lack the genuine impulse for it.

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Let me, therefore, announce this presupposition without further delay and postulate it as the *first proposition* of our inquiry:

(1) *The first presupposition of all knowledge is that the knower and that which is known are the same.*

I shall first explain and then prove this proposition.

In our first reflection on knowledge, we believe to have distinguished in it a subject of knowledge (or knowledge when conceived of as an act) and the object of knowledge, [i.e.,] that which is known. I purposely say: we *believe* to have discriminated, for precisely the reality of this distinction is at issue here, and it will become readily apparent that this very distinction between a subject and an object in knowledge constitutes the fundamental error in all knowledge. Once that distinction has been made, it is attempted once again at the same low level of reflection to reconcile the subject and the object; the *truth* of knowledge, for instance, is located in its *correspondence* with its object, or truth is explained as the correspondence of the subjectivity and objectivity in knowledge. It is claimed that only a knowledge corresponding to its object constitutes genuine knowledge; a knowledge without any corresponding object is no knowledge but mere thinking. Such reflections occur even in ordinary consciousness. It is evident that, by explaining truth as a correspondence of subjectivity and objectivity in knowledge, subject and object are already assumed to differ from one another, for only different [entities] may correspond [whereas] nondifferent ones are inherently one.

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Our own proposition states the *opposite* of this; namely, that there exists neither a subject *as* subject nor an object *as* object, but that what knows and what is known are one and the same, and consequently no more subjective than objective. That this be indeed the first presupposition of *all* knowledge, i.e., the presupposition without which knowledge would remain forever inconceivable, this we can prove only indirectly; namely, by demonstrating that knowledge remains inconceivable under any other possible presupposition. If, indeed, we assume that the knower and what is known differ, only the following alternatives are left. Either the knower is absolutely separated from what is known, and no relation exists between the two. Or a relation between the

two *does* take place. If no relation between the two exists, how could there even obtain *that* correspondence which is postulated by common reflection? How can knowledge be knowledge, [and how can] the known [be] something known? If we were to say that the two be united by something outside of knowledge and the known, this would merely amount to an assumption for the benefit of the explanation, one that does not constitute *knowledge* itself. For how can I have knowledge of what lies outside of knowledge?

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Hence, a relation between the two does exist. Once again, two scenarios are possible, the one *unilateral* and the other *bilateral*. By the former we mean that either the subject is determined by the object, or the object by the subject. The first assumption, namely, that the knower is determined by that which is known, is indeed the construct most frequently employed for explaining the correspondence between subjectivity and objectivity. To this I would merely like to object that, if knowledge is effected by that which is known, the latter will not be known as it is in itself but strictly *by virtue of its effect*. Even if we did not take into account this [objection] and did not ask how what is known, the object, can ever result in *knowledge*—which is its opposite—such a relation could involve the transferral of only the effect of the object, not, though, that of the *object itself*; thus it would also be merely this effect, not the object itself that would occur in the subject, or in the knowledge of the [object]. In short, in positing knowledge as the effect of that which is known, nothing whatsoever can be thought.

The other possible, unilateral relation—according to which the object is determined by the subject—proves no less incomprehensible. For either the [object] would be *absolutely* determined by the subject and, independent of the latter, would be nothing at all; in this case, and precisely for that reason, it would not be an object qua object: it would merely be the subject, in fact, not even that, because the subject is a subject only in opposition to an object. Or the determination of the object by the subject is only *relative*. In that case, however, it is knowledge only insofar as it is determined by the subject, it would be something *unknown*, [similar to] Kant's *thing in itself*, something ineffable that, in turn, is but a mere thought. Thus only a reciprocal effectivity would remain [possible]. Consequently, what is *known* as well as knowledge itself would have to be products of a reciprocal effect between subject and object; the known would take one part of its determination from the object and another from the subject; the same would apply to knowledge.

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However, it is readily apparent that this notion, being but a combination of the former two, can only be a compound version of their difficulties. It implies (1) a determination of the subject by the object because it conceives knowledge as the product of a reciprocity between the two; and (2) it implies a determination of the object by the subject because it conceives of the known itself as a [subject]. Hence, it is inconceivable to the extent that a determination of the subject by the object and of the object by the subject remain themselves inconceivable; in short, this combination, too, is null and void.

If the first distinction between knowledge and the known is grounded in entirely inadequate notions, such as render knowledge itself impossible, it is imperative for any initial presupposition about knowledge in general to state that this very distinction is erroneous; for if the knower and that which is known were to differ, knowledge itself would be inconceivable, and indeed impossible.

This much said, we now abandon forever that sphere of reflection that discriminates between the subject and the object, and our subsequent investigation can only be the development and exploration of the presupposition that the knower and that which is known are the same.¹

That distinction itself is already a product of our subjectivity and thus of our finitude. Precisely these two, however, will have to disappear for us in the course of philosophy. In truth, there does not ever nor anywhere exist a subject, a self, or any object or nonself. To say; I know or I am knowing already [posits] the *proton pseudos*. I know *nothing*, or my knowledge, to the extent that it is *mine*, is no true knowledge.² Not I know, but only totality *knows* in me, if the knowledge that I consider my own is to be a real, true knowledge. Yet this *One* that knows is also the only thing known, and neither difference nor correspondence exist here, for the *knowing* and the *known* are not different but the same.

(2) Now *this one that knows and is known is necessarily the identical One [dasselbe Eine] in all possible situations of knowledge and being known; hence, there exists necessarily and everywhere only one knowledge and one known.* (The first proposition was entirely general; it made claims not about this or that knowledge, but it claimed for all knowledge, without further specification, that it be inconceivable that the thinking and knowing [agency] and that which is thought and known, respectively, should even differ from one another.)

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For if the knower and that which is known are *generally* the same in knowledge, then the knower and the known will also be the same in each particular instance of knowledge. This *One*, then, recurs as the *One* that knows and is known in general in each particular instance of knowledge, and as this *One* (which knows in general, etc.) it is self-identical. Yet if it is self-identical, then neither a *knower* nor something known can ever exist *as such* in knowledge; consequently, the same *One* is necessarily only *one* knowledge and *one* known throughout all [instances of] knowledge.

(3) Hence, *the supreme knowledge necessarily implies that the self-sameness of the subject and the object becomes itself something known; or, because this self-sameness consists precisely in the identity of the knower and the known, it is that knowledge wherein the eternal self-sameness comes to recognize itself.*³ This is self-evident and requires no further proof.

(4) *This knowledge in which the eternal self-identity recognizes itself is reason.* For either reason is at no point knowledge, or it is knowledge of the eternal [and] immutable in knowledge. Yet there is nothing eternal, immu-

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table in knowledge except for this very identity of subject and object; while both of these may vary, as we conceded earlier, the identity itself remains. Hence, by coming to know what is immutable [and] eternal, reason can come to know only that eternal self-identity, and because, according to this very principle, the knowing is necessarily also the known, the self-knowledge of that eternal identity occurs only in reason.

My demonstration of proof assumes that reason is knowledge of the immutable and eternal. This claim itself, if it was not accepted freely, as ought to be generally expected, could be proven only through the opposition between reason and all other cognition. For example, the universality of the understanding remains at all times only a relative universal, as indeed it is capable of uniting the manifold of sensibility only in a relative unity. Meanwhile, the imagination can rise to a totality only by proceeding from the *sensible world*.

We have to consider yet another conception that proves of extreme importance for all of philosophy. We claim that reason is the self-knowledge [*Selbsterkennen*] of the eternal identity. With this proposition, we have simultaneously defeated forever all subjectivization [*Subjektivierung*] of rational knowledge.

I shall explain what is meant by *subjectivization*:

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We claim that only one [thing] is immutable and eternal in all subjective and objective knowledge; namely, the *identity of the two* itself. Subjective philosophy cannot oppose this claim except by asking: "Who, then, is to know this *eternal* identity of subject and object? If you reflect yourself in the [act of] knowledge, you will realize (a) that it is only *you* who knows that identity, (b) that this knowledge does not enable you to transcend yourself either, moreover (c) that you do not know anything *in itself*, and, (d) finally, that this identity, too, is once again a product of your knowledge and consequently only a mere *object of thought for you*."⁴ No doubt, anyone speaking in this manner simply has not yet attained the level of rational cognition. In *reason* all subjectivity ceases, and this is precisely what our proposition argues. In reason, that eternal identity itself is at once the knower and the known—it is not *me* who recognizes this identity, but it recognizes itself, and I am merely its organ.⁵ Reason is *Reason* precisely because its knowledge is not subjective; instead, an identity in it comes to recognize itself as the self-same [*weil in ihr das Gleiche das Gleiche erkennt*], thereby reconciling the opposition between subjectivity and objectivity in its highest power. In fact, we could offer this counterargument to the aforementioned subjectivization of reason: "You claim," I might respond, "that the knowledge of the *eternal unity* is once again only my knowledge, and you ask me to reflect on myself in order to discover that this is so. However," I would continue, "I will simply ask you to consider that this *reflection*, whereby you render that knowledge your knowledge and thus render it subjective, is only *your* reflection, and that thus *one* subjectivity

cancels out the other.⁶ Hence, you will have to admit that the knowledge of the absolute identity, irrespective of the reflection by which you effect it, is neither your knowledge nor that of any other person, but that it is precisely *absolute* knowledge, a knowledge free of any further determination." If our spirit did not involve a [form of] knowledge completely independent of all subjectivity and no longer the knowledge of the subject as subject but a knowledge of that which exists in strict autonomy ([i.e., a knowledge] of the unconditionally One), we would indeed have to abandon all philosophy; our entire thinking and knowing would leave us eternally trapped within the sphere of subjectivity, and we would have to consider and adopt the result of Kant's and Fichte's philosophy as the only possible one.

It is here, then, that our philosophy is demarcated from these two systems for which no knowledge of anything *in itself* is possible. We must admit, however, that philosophy is of no value whatsoever unless it offers us genuine guidance to that which is *in itself*, eternal, [and] immutable. How such knowledge is possible cannot be understood as long as knowledge continues to be thought as something subjective, as though it did not belong, as it were, to the world *itself*. Then that circle, in which Fichte thought the human spirit to be caught, would indeed prove inescapable; that [circle] consists in the *in-itself*, the absolute being always only *for myself*: "For it is myself," Fichte states, "who thinks and intuits; hence, the [in-itself] exists only in my knowledge and not in independence from it. Yet already any conceptions of the in-itself or the absolute imply that it be *independent from me*, independent from my knowledge. Hence, its cognition is entirely impossible."⁷ This conclusion merely contains one mistake, namely, that it presupposes that it is necessarily me who comes to know the in-itself, that it is *my* knowledge whereby it becomes known. Another passage reveals this *proton pseudos* with yet greater distinctness, as Fichte argues:

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As finite beings, we are compelled to explain all consciousness and its corresponding finitude by means of an in-itself, that is, by means of something independent from us; yet that explanation, too, follows the laws of *our* finite nature, and as soon as we reflect on this circumstance, that independent something outside ourselves is once more converted into a production of subjectivity.⁸

This conclusion, too, fails only in one respect, namely, to sustain the reflection *that* it is precisely and only our finite nature that prompts us to infer, from the finite, an in-itself as the ground for the explanation of appearances (hence, to place the in-itself only in a relation); to be sure, this [procedure] can never result in a knowledge of the in-itself.

If, because *that* mode of cognition which is proper to our finitude permits *no* knowledge of the in-itself, we are now to infer that no knowledge of

6,145 the [in-itself] *whatsoever* be possible, then our inherent finitude must first be posited as a *genuine reality* that admits of no way out, i.e., reason itself must be negated, for reason would obliterate all finitude and subjectivity.

The same is the case with the much-discussed dilemma concerning the possibility of a knowledge of the in-itself: *either* the in-itself is *in me or outside myself*. *In me*, [it is] merely known subjectively, [hence] the product of my cognition., *Outside* my self, [it is] strictly unknowable. This conclusion, too, is based upon an extremely rigid opposition of subjectivity and objectivity. The in-itself is by virtue of its very nature neither in me nor *outside* myself. The entire distinction hinges on the premise that it is *myself* who knows in all cognition, and that there exists no *self-knowledge* of the in-itself, i.e., no *reason* in which the selfhood and its opposite would disappear.

I have purposely dwelt on this matter, for this insight into the essence of reason and the possibility of an absolute knowledge, unconditional in every respect, constitutes the proper *center* or ground of all philosophy. Let us now proceed. We argue that the supreme knowledge is one wherein this eternal identity of the subject and the object comes to be known or (as an *identity*) comes to know itself as the substance of all knowing and all knowledge. Furthermore, we argue that this self-knowledge = reason.

(5) Hence *the fundamental law of reason and of all knowledge, to the extent that it is rational knowledge, is the law of identity or the proposition $A = A$* . For reason is the self-knowledge of that eternal *identity* and nothing else. This self-knowledge, then, finds its expression in the proposition $A = A$. Here we must explain the following subordinate proposition of our demonstration:⁹

6,146 All knowledge is nothing but an affirmation; all affirmation involves something *affirming* and something *affirmed*. That which affirms in knowledge is the subjective, and that which is affirmed is the objective. Both are one in knowledge, and the absolute affirmation of its unity is itself the highest knowledge, the highest cognition. This absolute affirmation, then, finds its expression in the proposition $A = A$, regardless of whether we understand it according to its formal aspect or according to its real meaning. When considered with response to its *form*, the proposition $A = A$ absolutely identifies subject and predicate. Yet what, then, is the relation between subject and predicate? The predicate is only posited by the subject; hence, the subject = that which predicates; e.g., the circle is round. I only posit "round" to the extent that a *circle* is being posited. However, in the proposition $A = A$ subject and predicate are being identified absolutely; thus it is claimed that the affirming and the affirmed [*das Affirmirte*] are eternally identical, that they are one and the same. Hence, the proposition $A = A$ is already, with respect to its form, the expression of the absolute identity of the affirming and the affirmed, of the subjective and the objective; it is itself the expression of the highest of all rational cognition, which is nothing other than the affirmation of that identity.

That proposition appears as a *real* expression of rational cognition when we consider the following: Taken in an absolute sense, the proposition $A = A$ does not claim that A [exists] at all, nor that A [exists] as subject or as predicate. [It does not state] that A exists at all, because it could be a mere fiction or an impossibility. (Already here, we can notice the strict contingency as to what, in this proposition, corresponds to the subject and what to the object.) Yet neither does the proposition $A = A$ claim that A exists as subject or as predicate. In fact, it states the opposite: that A does not exist as predicate and not as subject in particular, but only that their *identity* exists. Hence, this proposition allows us to abstract from everything, from the reality of the A as well as from its reality as one of a subject and predicate; the only thing from which we cannot abstract, and which remains as the only reality in this proposition, is the *self-sameness* or the *absolute identity* itself, which consequently constitutes the true *substance* of knowledge in this proposition. The latter, then, states nothing but the eternal and necessary identity of the affirming and the affirmed, the identity of subject and object; and it is only here that the *self-knowledge* of the eternal identity, and thus the highest knowledge of reason, finds its expression.

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Conclusions. (1) Only what is known according to the law of identity, $A = A$, is known as it exists in reason. Hence, everything that is not known in accordance with this law but according to a different law is not known as it exists in reason; and because a knowledge of the in-itself exists only in reason, it is also not known as it is *in-itself*.

(2) Another consequence of the preceding is the total and absolute independence of the *identity* or *immanent self-sameness* [*Gleichheit an sich selbst*] from anything subjective and objective. The *quality* of subject and predicate is completely irrelevant for the identity, and this already anticipates how that eternal unity can never be negated as unity but will always remain the same, regardless of the changes that the subject and the object may undergo. For the *identity* does not exist by virtue of the subject and the object, but, conversely, subject and object themselves exist only to the extent that this identity is, i.e., *only to the extent that both are the same*.

The proposition $A = A$ thus constitutes the only principle of unconditional and absolute knowledge. By absolute knowledge I mean one where it is not the *subject* as subject that knows but reason. However, reason expresses itself in this proposition only as what it properly is, namely, the self-knowledge of the eternal identity of subject and object.

To continue, the proposition $A = A$ states *universally* the eternal and necessary identity of subject and object. Yet this identity cannot be stated *universally* unless what is universal, or the essence of all things proves to be its own subjectivity and objectivity, its own affirming and affirmed. This universal affirmation of the identity of subject and object is thus *indirectly an*

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affirmation of the fact that the essence of all things is both its own affirmation and its affirmed. (Only here [does there lie] a real content.)

(6) Hence, *the absolute identity of subject and object can be affirmed universally only if the in-itself, the essence of all existence, is inherently and autonomously its own affirming and affirmed.* For the subjective and the objective relate to one another (see 5) like the affirming to the affirmed. Subject and object are one, and that means, the affirming and the affirmed are one. Yet in a *primordial* and absolute sense these two can be one only because that which is its own affirmation and affirmed is one. Both, then, can be *universally* one, as is stated in $A = A$, only if the *universality* in all of being, the essence of the things themselves, is such that it affirms itself and is its own affirmed.

(7) *That which absolutely affirms itself and thus is its own affirmed, is only the absolute or God.* For according to the popular conception, only that is *absolute* which exists by virtue of itself and through itself. This, however, means to be by *virtue of its own affirmation*, which means to be its own affirming and affirmed. By contrast, the existence of something that is not absolute is generally determined by something else and thus has its affirmation outside itself. Every particular is generally not its own cause but has its cause in something else. The cause of a thing is that which affirms that thing, [and] the thing as effect is the affirmed. In the case of the nonabsolute, these will not be one, whereas in the absolute they are necessarily one.

6,149 *God is His own absolute affirmation*; this is the only true idea of God, which can later be expressed in various ways, to be sure, yet which will necessarily and always remain the same. Hence, if the affirming corresponds to the subjective and the affirmed to the objective, and, furthermore, if the subjective corresponds to the idea or the concept and the objective to Being, this unity can also be expressed as follows: the absolute is that which, by virtue of its idea, immediately is or that whose ideal includes its *Being* [and] whose idea is thus the immediate affirmation of Being)and not idea or Being in a discrete sense). The same has also been expressed as follows: with respect to the absolute, the Ideal is immediately also the Real. In *this* expression of the idea of the absolute, the opposition to the nonabsolute can be fully demonstrated. As regards the nonabsolute, *Being* can never be posited through its mere concept. Something independent of the concept and thinking must always be added for the object to *exist*. By thinking a given object = A , I merely think A ; I do not think anything else that, in this quality, would be non- A . Yet if A is not absolute, it is determined by something else, which affirms it; hence, I must move on to something independent of my thinking, which is merely a thinking of A , to something other than A , to B , to posit A as real, and then again from B to C , etc. In the case of the absolute, however, I do not move beyond the identity of the concept to something other, but by thinking of A as a concept, I immediately and necessarily also

posit that same A as Being, and it is here that we recognize the entire, real meaning of the law of reason, $A = A$. Ordinary reflection discriminates between two forms of knowledge: (1) something *conditional* where the affirming and the affirmed are not one *in themselves* but differ from one another. Knowledge of this kind Kant calls *synthetic* knowledge, and it requires that we add to the concept = A something else that is not this concept, = B, if we are to posit A as real; (2) [the other] knowledge is *unconditional*. Its structure does not characterize ordinary knowledge except for a merely subjective or, as Kant calls it, *analytical* knowledge. Here the proposition $A = A$ is understood merely with regard to its *form*, namely as [meaning that] if I think A, I think A. With this, I indeed do not move beyond *my thinking*, yet I also do not predicate any *reality*. Hence, the opposition inherent in common knowledge, also accepted by Kant, is this: Either I *know* of something real, something objective, [and] my knowledge is *real*; however, in this case it is also merely of a conditional, synthetic nature. Or I know unconditionally; in this case, however, my knowledge is not objective but merely subjective, [and] I do not move beyond my own self. With the reality, I always lose the unconditionality, and vice versa. This is indeed the crucible of common logic, a standpoint also maintained by Kant and his entire philosophy that, as a result, finds reality only in the conditional, synthetic knowledge; and yet, according to the higher insight of true philosophy, it is precisely [synthetic knowledge] that lacks reality. In *reason* (as we have determined it), I have simultaneously an *unconditional* and a *real* knowledge; reason is a knowledge that, *without moving beyond itself*, without moving beyond the identity of this idea, *nevertheless determines its object immediately*; i.e., the *object* of rational cognition itself is such that, as an object—and that means also with regard to its reality—it, too, is determined only by the law of identity. Such can be the case only with an object whose intuition allows for an immediate continuity between *idea and Being*, that is, an object that affirms itself by virtue of its own idea. The true object of rational cognition is therefore the absolute, for it is the only instance where the law of identity will simultaneously prove the law of Being; and it is only now that we have fully determined the true meaning of the proposition $A = A$.

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Addendum. As regards its real meaning, the proposition $A = A$ expresses the immediate knowledge of the absolute, or, put differently, it [states that] the *reality* of the proposition $A = A$ is the immediate knowledge of God or the absolute itself.

(8) *It is an immediate knowledge of God or the absolute.* For in reason, the eternal identity of the subject and object comes to know *itself*, i.e., reason is an *immediate* knowledge of this [identity], and it is known universally. Yet precisely this identity of subject and object, this being one of the affirm-

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ing and the affirmed is the essence, the idea of the absolute. Hence, if in reason the identity of subject and object comes to know itself, the idea of the absolute, too, evolves into self-knowledge, i.e., affirms itself in reason. Accordingly, reason offers us an absolute affirmation, i.e., an immediate knowledge of the idea of God.

Put *differently*, God is not as other things are; He is only to the extent that He *affirms Himself*. This self-affirmation or identity of subject and object, however, comes to know itself once again in reason, and thus reason, too, involves self-knowledge, i.e., an immediate affirmation of the idea of God. The first self-affirmation of God is only repeated in reason.

Corollary. God, or the absolute, is the only immediate object of knowledge, whereas all other knowledge is strictly mediated. The opposition between Dogmatism and the true philosophy is already marked sufficiently by noting that the former at all times can postulate only a mediated knowledge of the absolute, whereas the latter postulates a strictly immediate knowledge. The immediate affirmation of the idea of God by the form of reason, *which is itself only the idea of God and nothing else*, proved inaccessible to the Dogmatic systems.¹⁰

Thus far, our entire train of thought has made it clear that nowhere do we speak of God in terms of *Dogmatism*. Dogmatic systems arise when concepts of the finite world and of finite representation are applied to the infinite [and] absolute. For Dogmatism, the absolute is always only the last inference of philosophy, and God is only the supreme but certainly not the *One*; apart from God, there still exists the world, and from this world, along a sequence of causes and effects, there proceeds a deduction that finally leads to God as the supreme and absolute cause. For the true philosophy, God is not the supreme but the unconditionally *One*, not the endpoint or the last link in a sequence but the center. There is no world outside him to which he relates in the manner of cause and effect; for otherwise, God would be determined by a law other than that of identity; however, as we demonstrated earlier, the law of identity is the only principle for the knowledge of God. Nothing can *emanate* from God, for God is everything, and He is characterized by no other relation than that of the eternal and infinite affirmation of Himself.¹¹

If indeed some people have recently elevated faith or a form of *divination* [*Ahndung*] over knowledge, such as Eschenmayer, this can be explained only as follows: reason is the immediate affirmation of the idea of God.¹² However, reason is not the subjective [and] particular; it is strictly universal and defeats all particularity [and] all subjectivity. The particularity or subjectivity of a well-organized spirit, however, may conceivably be purified to the point of its identity with *reason*, and here the knowledge of the divine is no longer a mere knowledge of the *universality* of the soul but also of its particularity (which is now one with the universal); and at this point the subject can rejoice in the divine to the extent that it has espoused the universal. Yet since

it attains this knowledge not on account of its particular nature, but only because of its configuration and assimilation to the divine, this knowledge will be endowed not with a *universal* but, instead, with a *particular* (though no less unconditional) epistemic quality; and in this respect it is called *faith*, just as it can be called *divination* [*Ahndung*] in the case of the mere approximation of that unity of the particular by reason.¹³ For the same reason, too, Eschenmayer's [conception of] faith remains but an attempt to salvage subjectivity.

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However, all the other diverse objections to the immediate knowledge of the absolute—[namely], that only a taking for truth [*Fürwahrhalten*], a supposition (or some similarly ill-conceived expression) could be possible with regard to the absolute—are all completely unfounded. If rational knowledge is subjective, it can indeed only be a supposition or a taking for truth. Yet to convert reason into something subjective is to negate reason itself.

We have determined the knowledge of the absolute under reason as *strictly immediate*. Nevertheless, several determinations of reason still remain necessary, which are as follows:

(1) All immediate knowledge is also [and] necessarily a completely *adequate* one, both commensurate with and wholly understanding of its object. For in immediate knowledge, the knower and the known are one. Hence, the latter is penetrated by the former, and the knower is in no way *limited* by what is known. The known and the knower are themselves only one, just as in the intuition of pure space my knowledge does not simply delimit space but *my intuition* is simultaneously also that which is being intuited, and vice versa, as regarded from another point of view.¹⁴

(2) Hence, the mode of cognition of the absolute, if it is to be absolute, is also *contemplative*. All immediate knowledge is always = intuition, and to that extent all contemplation, too, is intuition. Yet since in our case reason is that which knows, this intuition is an intuition of reason or, as it is called otherwise, an *intellectual intuition*.¹⁵ That the knowledge of the absolute is an immediate, contemplative one, [that it is] an intellectual intuition, is merely the consequence of the necessary essence of reason as the immediate affirmation of the idea of God. Conversely, then, it is to be concluded from the essence of a contemplative knowledge and an immediate intuition of reason that its object can strictly and exclusively be the absolute. If, for example, we oppose the intellectual intuition to a sensible intuition, and if we define the latter as something consistently bound and restricted wherein we feel *coerced*, intellectual intuition, by contrast, is necessarily an *absolutely free* intuition (barring that *free* be not misconstrued, as it has happened before, as meaning that the intellectual intuition be *produced* with freedom); already here we notice that its object cannot possibly be limited and finite. It is neither the object of the external sense, nor is it the object of the inner sense, as in Fichte, who explains the intellectual intuition as follows: "When I think an external object, this thought and the thing are different, yet when I

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think myself, subject and object are one, and in this unity there lies the intellectual intuition."¹⁶ The identity of subject and object is not restricted to the consciousness of myself; it is *universally* applicable. Hence, neither an external, sensible object nor the empirical self or any other object of the inner sense can become the correlate of an intellectual intuition. For the objects of the [inner sense] are just as limited and mutable as those of the external sense. Consequently, the object of an intellectual intuition can only be something infinite, strictly unlimited, and inherently affirmative. Hence, if someone should demand that we communicate the intellectual intuition to him, this would be the same as to demand that reason be communicated to him. The absence of the intellectual intuition proves only that in him reason has not yet reached the transparency of self-knowledge. Intellectual intuition is never anything particular, but is precisely and unconditionally universal.

I now return to the earlier proposition:

6,155 The *form of the absolute affirmation* of [and] by itself, which constitutes the very *essence* of the absolute is, as we said earlier, *repeated in reason*, and its light reveals how we grasp the absolute, true, and proper mediation between it and knowledge. Just as objects of sensibility cannot affirm *themselves* for the sensible eye but are affirmed by *light*—which, meanwhile, affirms itself and thus reveals both itself and darkness—the *idea* of God in the spiritual world is the first affirmation of all reality; there is no reality other than that which exists and which is affirmed by virtue of the idea of Him; yet this idea has no affirmation outside itself; it is its own affirming and affirmed. The absolute light, the idea of God, strikes reason like a flash of lightening, so to speak, and its luminosity endures in reason as an eternal affirmation of knowledge.¹⁷ By virtue of this affirmation, which is the essence of our soul, we recognize *the eternal impossibility of nonbeing* that can never be known nor comprehended; and that ultimate question posed by the vertiginous intellect hovering at the abyss of infinity: “Why [is] something rather than nothing?”, this question will be swept aside forever by the necessity of Being, that is, by the absolute affirmation of Being in knowledge. The absolute *position* of the idea of God is indeed nothing but the absolute negation of nothingness, and the same certainty of reason that ensures the negation of nothingness and thus the nullity of nothingness also affirms the totality [das All] and the eternity of God.

Hence, there also is no knowledge except to the extent that there exists the *idea* of God; there is no other knowledge that would lead up to *this* [idea], but it is only once this idea has been affirmed absolutely that all knowledge will have been affirmed. Only then will we recognize that there is *not* nothing, but that a totality exists necessarily and eternally.

6,156 In philosophy the *idea of the absolute* comes first. This we have seen. I now proceed with my presentation. The point of departure is the absolute identity of the affirming and the affirmed, or of the subject and object, which

I shall subsequently also refer to as *absolute identity* in general, in part on account of the expression's conciseness, and in part because it is only *that identity which can be called* absolute, because it cannot be negated anywhere or by any means, as the following remarks shall make yet clearer.

(9) *The absolute identity as identity cannot be cancelled in any way.* That is, it can at no point and in no form whatsoever be negated. [This] already follows from (2). For it is the eternally same in all knowledge, the immutable, that which persists, regardless of subject and predicate, subject and object, all of which may change as they wish.—We can thus foresee that, in reason, we shall never *know* any relation other than the one inherent in this identity, and the strict task of our further construction will be to *present identity eternally as identity* and to recognize nothing as real that would induce us to consider this identity to be cancelled or negated.

(10) *All that is [Alles, was ist,] is, to the extent that it has being, this absolute identity.* For the absolute identity can never and nowhere be negated; hence, the negation of identity is necessarily and eternally nothing. Thus, to the extent that it really is, all that exists is actual [and] absolute identity. Hence, to the extent (see appendix) that it was not the absolute identity it would not be; [rather,] there would be mere nonessences, *non-ens*.

Conclusion. *All that is is, to the extent that it is, One:* namely, it is the eternally self-same identity, the One that alone exists, and that therefore is all that can be known. [This is merely an] inversion of the preceding proposition. Hence (this being once again an immediate conclusion of the preceding proposition), that whereby a *difference* is posited in general (that is, if something of that kind should exist) does not belong to the essence, to the *esse*, but rather to the *non-esse*, to the nonbeing of things, and it is a mere determination of these, not to the extent that they are (for in that respect they are one) but to the extent that they are not. To the extent, then, that the absolute identity is the immediate expression of the absolute itself (for only the absolute affirms immediately the eternal and immutable self-sameness of subject and object by affirming itself), and to the extent that the *absolute identity* is the immediate expression of God or of the absolute in all existence, the proposition: "all that is has Being, to the extent that it is," should also be phrased as follows: "To the extent that it has being, all that is, is God." Hence, all *being* that is not the Being of God is no *Being* but much rather the negation of Being, and we can therefore claim the following with determination:^a

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(11) *There is everywhere only One Being, only One true Essence, identity, or God as the affirmation of the latter.*

^aRegarding (9) and (10), see also the identical propositions in the first presentation of the system of identity (4,119).

Proof. For it is only proper to the essence of God to be His own affirmation. Yet this self-sameness [*Gleichheit*] is generally posited only by virtue of the fact that there is One to whose essence it is proper to be His own affirming and affirmed principle (6).

Note. Hence, there are not distinct substances but only One substance, not a diverse Being but only One Being.

(12) *God is unconditionally One, or there is only One absolute.* For there is only One substance, which is God [or] that which is affirmed by itself, and hence, also vice versa.

6,158 In an indirect manner, the unity of God can be demonstrated as follows (see also Spinoza): as regards God, *Being* follows immediately from the idea. However, the idea [or] the concept of His essence, implies in itself a *plurality*. Thus, for example, it does certainly not follow from the general concept of man, that right now there should exist only a certain number of human beings and no more. This derives from something independent [and] extraneous to the idea. Hence, if there were to exist several absolutes, the reason for this multiplicity would have to lie outside of such an absolute, yet this contradicts the concept of the absolute, namely, that it be that whose Being derives exclusively from its idea; hence, the concept of plurality, i.e., the concept of quantity, never permits its application to the absolute—the latter being the more universal expression of our proposition; for just as the concept of multiplicity is never applicable to the idea of God, the concept of numerical unity cannot be applied to God either. God is *One* as regards substance, not number, and this unity of substance cannot be cancelled by any quantitative multiplicity. If God were to exist solely in a numerical sense, the multiplicity would not be negated by *his very nature* but only by accident, [and] God would be an individual; however, he is neither an individual nor a species. [He is] not an individual, for then His Being would not be entirely adequate to His concept, and the affirming [would not be adequate] to the affirmed. Nor [is He] a *species*, for in that case several absolutes would have to be possible, and if the absolute were nevertheless *One*, the reason for this unity would not inhere in its nature or idea but would lie outside of it, which inherently contradicts the concept of the absolute.

(13) *God is unconditionally eternal.* By eternal I mean that which at no point bears any relation to time. Unconditionally eternal thus means neither that which has no beginning in time and which is merely conceived of as existing since times immemorial, nor does it imply any beginning. Most people conceive of God's eternity as a presence [*Dasein*] that, in turn, they conceive of as an existence of infinite duration. However, God can never bear any relation to time, and hence, He can neither have nor not have a beginning in time.

Proof. Whatever bears a relation to time involves *duration*. Duration, however, is generally a determination of Being not as the latter conforms to the concept but to the extent that it does not conform to it. (It is not the concept that is said to have duration, but only the particular being, i.e., that which is a negation of the universal concept.) Yet in God there does not exist any being that has not been determined by the concept or might differ from the idea (by virtue of the absolute identity of the affirming and the affirmed). Hence, the concept of *duration*, too, is nowhere applicable to the absolute. This being granted, however, the absolute cannot bear any relation to time either; it is unconditionally eternal. *Put differently*, duration = imperfection. The finite thing possesses duration, because its particularity is inadequate to its universal. *If it was* at all times factually and actually that which it could be in accordance with its concept, it would not exist in time at all. However, as regards the absolute, Being is strictly in conformity with the concept, for the affirmed is homologous to the affirming; it is that affirming [principle] itself. Hence, too, *time and duration* are concepts altogether inapplicable to the absolute in this respect.

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Addendum. That which is eternal according to its *Being* can furthermore be known only in an eternal sense—viz., a knowledge that does not merely apply at all times but applies without any relation to time whatsoever. (Cause and effect [are] no eternal truth, merely $A = A$.) Reason thus is an eternal knowledge, just as philosophy [is] a science of the *eternal* truth in the aforementioned sense.

(14) *God cannot be conceived of in any other way but as having preceded or as preceding time*; this being an immediate consequence of the above.

Note. That which does not precede *something else* with regard to time may still precede *something else* with regard to the *idea*; thus the idea of the circle does not precede all individual, concrete circles in time but with regard to the idea. Conversely, the fact that something precedes something else with regard to its *nature* or *idea* does not imply that it also precedes the latter with regard to time. Hence, infinite space exists prior to individual spaces with regard to the idea, for the latter ones can be conceived of as a certain number of negations only under the auspices of, and as enclosed by, this infinite space; however, such an [infinite space] in no manner precedes them with regard to *time*. Thus God precedes everything according to the idea or nature, yet He cannot precede anything with regard to time without being posited in time himself, which is inconceivable according to what we noted earlier. Not only can he not [do this] as regards anything else,

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(15) . . . but even *in the Absolute itself there is no pre- or post-*. For the absolute is altogether One, [and] its Being is nothing partial so that something in it might precede and something else follow. In the [absolute] there is

no sequence of determinations, for otherwise we would also be positing some passive determination [or] affection for it. Yet the absolute is necessarily nonaffective [*affektionslos*]. There is nothing in God to which he might incline or move, but he is the eternally same and unmoved center.

(16) *The Absolute is unconditionally infinite.* There are two forms of infinity: one that we ascribe to what we are incapable of delimiting, e.g., space, time, etc. or what is infinite by virtue of its cause, such as the species in organic nature that are infinite by virtue of their cause. There exists another infinity, however, altogether different from the former two, that applies to a being by virtue of its definition, as Spinoza puts it, or by virtue of its idea. Such an infinity is that of God. For God is the absolute affirmation of Himself as the infinite reality. This infinity is altogether nonspatial and nontemporal, not an infinity that *develops*, such as the infinity of a causal sequence, but an infinity that exists by virtue of an absolute position, i.e., an actual infinity. Hence, we will neither now nor later understand anything else by this infinity of the absolute; and as an immediate consequence of the first idea of God, which is precisely that of the infinite self-affirmation, it does not require any proof. We will have to address later the origins of that other, merely deceptive infinity, which is posited not by virtue of an absolute [and] indivisible position but merely by virtue of an absence of limits or of endless addition.

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(17) *Nothing has originated according to [a] Being in itself.* How, in truth, should something originate or have originated in itself, because everything is that *can be*, and because what is not eternal, *without time*, namely, absolute identity or God, *can also never be*? As certainly as God is the position of infinite reality by virtue of His mere *idea*, so is this reality certain, and because it exists, no other *reality* can exist; however, this one merely *is*, and hence, it does not become or originate.

Conclusion. Considered in and of itself, nothing is finite.

Note. It follows that, from the standpoint of reason, no finitude exists anywhere, and that therefore the *origin of this finitude* cannot be sought in God, because only the infinite emanates from God; furthermore, to consider things as finite is to consider them not as they are *in themselves*.

(18) *God only exists to the extent that He affirms and is affirmed by Himself.* (With respect to the absolute [there is] no difference between essence and form.) For God is only in an unconditional sense, or He may nowhere exist in a conditional manner; an unconditional being, however, is only one that posits or affirms itself. Hence, God is as necessary as he is unconditional, [and] hence, He necessarily affirms, and is affirmed by, Himself, and this mode of being is inseparable from His essence (namely, that of unconditionality).¹⁸ There does not exist any transition between essence and form, no before and after, but form itself follows from the essence by virtue of the mere law of

identity; that is, form itself is one with essence. Likewise, the relation between being and form remains equally inapplicable, for it pertains only to the sphere of concrete entities; namely, form is always the limiting [aspect] of Being, which is the universal just as the form is the particular. At the level of the concrete, however, the universal and the particular will necessarily differ. The latter (the concrete) is concrete precisely because the form [is] the negation of Being and of the universal. As the form dissolves, the substance or Being remains. This difference, however, is unthinkable with respect to the absolute; for here the form, which is that of the [identity] of the affirming and affirmed, is itself the unconditional, [and] hence, does not limit the essence. The concrete thing has a form, [yet] the absolute is the form *for itself*, and in this respect it is once again devoid of form [*formlos*], namely, to the extent that the formless is posited as identical with the infinite.

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Of greater importance and significance for what follows is this reflection on the previous proposition: that God is the affirming and the affirmed of himself is to say that the same essence of God exists as the affirming and as the affirmed, or that God is *the same* as the former and the latter. Hence, *both* the affirming as the affirming and the affirmed as the affirmed belong no more to the essence of God in *particular* than that in the proposition: $A = A$, the A would belong discretely, be it as subject or as predicate, to the essence of the identity; conversely, then, the affirming and the affirmed, each as such, are nothing in and of themselves, and the essence of God *does not belong to them*; they do not exist except to the extent that God is, i.e., to the extent that the One is which affirms itself.

Addendum. God is the intrinsically homologous, identical, and self-same essence of the affirming and the affirmed, *yet* conversely neither the affirming nor the affirmed, each as such, belong *to the essence of God*.

Proof. For there neither exists anything discretely affirming or affirmed, for only God exists as such, and only because of God can there also be an affirming and an affirmed. Yet even then, neither one of these exists in particular and for itself, but only *God is*, [namely,] as the affirming and the affirmed; i.e., both exist only to the extent that they are simultaneously the same, namely, God.

What we have said thus far, and what shall subsequently become more distinct, may preliminarily serve to correct the almost universal misconceptions regarding the idea of the absolute. The ordinary notion regarding this idea, which can be found in books by both supporters and detractors of this idea, is as follows. Initially, there exists something subjective and something objective (= affirming and affirmed), each by itself, and each opposing the other. Eventually, philosophical reflection intervenes and *combines* the opposites into *One*, and this *One*, the *product* of such a combination, is henceforth

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called the absolute. To begin with, I should say this: there exists neither something subjective nor something objective in itself, but there is only One—God, whose immediate affirmation [is] reason itself, and who is the sole, immediate object of knowledge. In this sole, immediate object of the intellectual intuition there lies no duplicity, nothing dualistic—nothing subjective or objective—but He is absolutely monolithic [*absolut einfach*]. However, precisely by virtue of this absolute *monolithic* [nature], He affirms *Himself* immediately. Even with this self-affirmation we have posited nothing affirming or affirmed, nothing subjective or objective as such, but *only God* is being posited as *the same*, [namely,] as the affirming or affirmed; yet neither the affirming nor the affirmed is being posited as such. Hence, because my presentation has shown that not even an affirming and an affirmed can emanate from the self-affirmation of the absolute, but that only God inheres in the latter, [it follows that] God—as the *uniting* [principle] of the opposition—can even less emanate from the opposition of the affirming and the affirmed, of the subjective and the objective. To claim anything else would be just as contradictory as to claim that the circle originates from the union of the periphery and the center, or that their composition would *provide* me with the circle as a product, when, in fact, the *idea* of the circle necessarily precedes both of them.

6,164 If the opposition of the subjective and the objective was the point of departure and the absolute merely the product, to be posited only after the fact by way of an annihilation of the opposition, the absolute itself would be a mere negation, namely, the negation of a difference of which we would not know whence it comes and why precisely this [difference] should serve, by way of its own negation, to demonstrate the absolute. The absolute, then, would not be a *position* but merely a negative idea, a product of synthetic thought, or as some people still believe, of the synthesizing imagination, and quite clearly a mediate rather than immediate object of cognition; in short, a mere abstraction [*Gedankending*].

I must be very explicit with these reminders, in part because all objections that have been raised against the system of identity rest on this misconstrual, which is partially intentional and partially unintentional. Furthermore, [I must be explicit] because this first misconception breeds again others, and because subsequently it repeats itself continually. Thus, for example, the absolute is purported to emanate from a combination of the subjective and the objective into one Being, though, eventually, the subjective and the objective are once again being deduced from this One.

The immediate object of cognition is necessarily also something absolutely monolithic [*Einfaches*], for this alone allows for immediate cognition. However, what is monolithic can, with the same certainty that it has of its own Being, only affirm itself, whereas it cannot be affirmed by anything else. If, however, we say: God, being monolithic, affirms Himself and is affirmed by

Himself, we certainly do not posit something affirming in itself nor anything affirmed as such, but we merely posit God as something monolithic, as His own affirming and affirmed. What idea do we have of God Himself? Precisely this one, that He affirms Himself and that He is *being affirmed* by Himself, i.e., precisely that He is the **Unity** of the affirming and the affirmed. "The affirming and the affirmed are both God" is to say nothing other than that both, the affirming and the affirmed, each for itself, is the identity of the affirming and the affirmed. Hence, there is nothing purely affirmative [*Bejahendes*], for the affirmation of God is God himself, i.e., is already the identity of the affirmation and the affirmed: likewise, nothing is purely and exclusively affirmed [*Bejahtes*], for this affirmed is once again God Himself, i.e., He Himself is the identity of the affirmative and the affirmed. No *division* is possible here, so that some part of God would be the affirmation of His reality, and the other the affirmed, but each, the affirming and the affirmed, is the *entire* absolute. No division is possible, for if God is generally the affirmation of Himself, as the affirming He is once again His own affirmed—He himself posits Himself as the affirming, just as He affirms Himself by being affirmed; i.e., He is the entire absolute as each of these. To illustrate that [out conception] is not liable to any infinite regress, we shall designate God as His own affirmation with A, and the affirmed with B; we may now say that God as *affirming* Himself is necessarily also His own affirmed, i.e., He is not merely A, but as A [He is] also already B or, more precisely, He is neither A nor B but the inseparable identity of the two. Likewise, God as His own *affirmed* is necessarily also already the affirming, i.e., He is not the pure, simple B but immediately, as such, also A; i.e., He is once again neither A nor B in and of Himself, but as A and B [He is] the entire, indivisible absolute; and since A and B are but the same, He is as A and as B strictly the same, $A = A$.

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Put differently. The proposition $A = A$ does not, therefore, equate two unequals with one another, but the same is being posited as identical with itself [*dasselbe wird sich selbst gleichgesetzt*]. Hence, A, as subject, is already the whole, just as A, when seen as the predicate, is the whole; we posit not a simple identity, but the *identity of an identity*.¹⁹ Just as in the proposition $A = A$ the first A is not merely a part of the whole, but is the entire, indivisible A itself, [the same holds true for] the predicate, too. Thus the absolute as its own affirmation is not merely a part of the absolute but the entire absolute; the same is the case with the affirmed.

I have purposely dwelled on this subject, seeking to expand it in all directions, because it [has] the most significant consequences, and because a misunderstanding on this point will necessarily infiltrate all of philosophy. Thus I shall attempt to explicate the same issue by way of a geometrical example, for the progress of philosophy, which is nothing but the tranquil contemplation of the nature of the absolute, along with its consequences, can

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be most appropriately be symbolized by the progress of geometry;²⁰ conversely, it is only the scientific progress of the completed philosophy that can elucidate the enigmatic symbolism of geometry. The beginning of all geometry is the circle; the first proposition of Euclid, namely, that the construction of the triangle can be comprehended only through the mediating figure of the circle, and only through and in it. The idea of the circle, then, is (1) doubtless an absolutely simple one, although this indivisible position of the circle already comprises the center and the periphery; (2) in the circle, the center is the affirming, or it behaves as the completely subjective [factor], whereas the periphery is the affirmed or the objective; the former is the Ideal and the latter is the Real. This I prove as follows: The affirmation of all reality is that which comprises and, as it were, absorbs all reality within itself. Hence, because in geometry reality is understood as extension, the affirmation in the circle is expressed as the negation of all extension, i.e., by the center point. If the center point is the idea, then the circumference is necessarily the conversion of the center's ideality into reality, or it is what this [ideality] affirms. However, we now must ask the following:

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(1) Can there, in a circle, exist (a) a center [and] (b) a periphery in and of itself? Impossible, for not every point that has been randomly placed in space is a center point. The center point as such—and in its quality as the center—already implies by necessity the concept of a line whose points are all at equal distance from this point, i.e., it implies a circumference. That which affirms is thus posited only to the extent that we have posited immediately and simultaneously an affirmed. The same is the case with the periphery. Hence, I posit—this we must take note of—neither a center as such nor a periphery as such, but in *each* of these I necessarily posit already the circle, i.e., the absolute unity, which *in itself* is neither center nor periphery but strictly this circle. We shall now see what becomes center and periphery when considered from a perspective other than that of their unity. The center becomes a mere point. We have something affirming without anything affirmed; the periphery turns into a straight line, which is the *distension* [Abfall] of the circle; it is the eternal direction of all motion *away from* the center, [i.e.,] of all centrifugation: here we have something affirmed without anything affirming; we have that which, in the circle, is *One* in its formal difference; i.e., we have posited both as a relative negation wherein the affirming and the affirmed exclude one another mutually. This is precisely the case in philosophy. If we posit the subjective and the objective as real, each one in itself, we have in the first case something merely subjective that negates the objective, and in the other case something objective that negates the subjective; i.e., we have nothing absolute but merely negations. We now must ask: (2) Do center and periphery relate to one another *in the circle* as parts of the latter, or is not each of these *for itself*—namely, to the extent that is generally is what it is—already the entire circle? This would seem to follow from what we have just

discovered, namely, that the center as center necessarily also comprises the circumference and thus the entire circle, and vice versa. Put yet more accurately, the center is the entire circle, only seen in its ideality or in its affirmation, [and] the periphery is the entire circle, only seen in its reality. The center is the circle as its own affirmation, the *ideal* circle, yet it is already the entire circle. The periphery is the circle as the affirmed, yet it, too, is already the entire circle. (The *ideal* circle is represented by the center; for what else is a point but a circular line with an infinitely small radius, or a circle where the periphery is isomorphous with the center point?) If, then, the center and the periphery, each for itself, are already *the entire circle*, I now ask (3) whether we have, in these two, an intuition of something dual [*ein Zweifaches*], [or] whether we do not rather have an intuition of something absolutely monolithic [*Einfach*]. Furthermore, [I ask] whether we can imagine the identity [*Einssein*] of *the two* in the circle as such a oneness as that of two parts which constitute a whole only together: hence, whether perhaps the center and the periphery could be conceived of as *factors* of the circle (because each of these is in itself already the entire circle), *and*: whether the circle itself could henceforth be understood as the product, as the synthesis of the center and the periphery, because it is already entirely and indivisibly present in each of them.

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In applying this model to the present issue, I now ask: (1) are by virtue of the idea of God, the affirming and the affirmed something *in and of themselves*? Impossible, they are only by virtue of the idea of God, just as the center and the periphery are what they are only by virtue of the *idea* of the circle. Yet (2) might not the affirming and the affirmed be parts in God, so that one part of the absolute is strictly affirmative and the other merely affirmed? Impossible, rather each one is the whole for itself, namely, the indivisible absolute, or God himself, just as in [geometry] each one is already for itself the entire circle. Finally, (3) do we have an intuition of a duplicity in the affirming and the affirmed, a bifurcation [*Entzweiung*] in God himself, or do we not, rather, have an intuition of the highest conceivable unity? A division in God would obtain if His [idea] contained something other than the affirmed. The highest conceivable unity lies in God because what affirms and what is affirmed by itself are one and the same.

Hence, it is not the idea of God to be the affirming or the affirmed *in particular*, but to be always and necessarily the unity of these two. The importance of these observations becomes fully transparent only if we look at their consequences, for we have posited—together with the unity of the affirming and the affirmed—the eternal unity of everything subjective and objective, of everything Ideal and Real and thereby have simultaneously negated everything subjective and objective as such; in all knowledge, as well as in all Being, we can know only the eternal, indivisible unity of the two, i.e., God.

6,169 (19) *The self-affirmation of God may also be characterized as a process of self-knowledge.* For all cognition [and] all knowledge is *only* an affirmation. Hence, if God is the absolute affirmation of Himself, He also possesses absolute self-knowledge—and this self-knowledge of God constitutes necessarily the origin of all knowledge, just as all other affirmation is affirmed only by the affirmation of God.

Addendum. That which is affirmative in knowledge is the subjective, whereas the affirmed is the objective or that which is known.

Conclusion. Hence, that which has been proven for the affirming and the affirmed will apply to the subjective and objective in knowledge as well; and because in the case of the former the proof had been given with regard to God, i.e., because it had been proven with strictly *universality* (for God is the universal of all Being and knowledge, see 6 and 11), that which has been proven with regard to the affirming and the affirmed will also stand as *universal* proof for the subjective and objective in all knowledge.

(20) *All knowledge in God is conceivable only as an absolute affirmation of what is known, which follows immediately from the idea of God.* For, to begin with, nothing is *outside* of God, [and] God can therefore not know anything outside Himself. God's knowledge of Himself, however, is an absolute affirmation of Himself. Hence, no knowledge is conceivable in God except such as consists in the absolute affirmation of what is known. Furthermore, nothing can follow from God, and nothing can be in Him except for what follows from Him or is in Him by virtue of His idea; hence, there is no condition in God other than the absolute affirmation of what is known, which [in turn] follows immediately from His idea.

6,170 **Explication.** By affirming Himself, God simultaneously [and] necessarily affirms reality as infinite. Hence, everything that has been affirmed by God's self-affirmation follows immediately from His idea, and God's knowledge of it is necessarily the same as His self-knowledge. Because God's knowledge of Himself is an absolute position of Himself, no other knowledge inheres in God than that which exists by virtue of this position. Put differently: God does not know things *because they exist*, but conversely, *they exist because God knows them*, i.e., because they are affirmed immediately with the knowledge that he has of Himself, or because they are affirmed simultaneously with the absolute affirmation of Himself. All finite representation is either *real* or merely *ideal*. If it is real, that which is known appears as the *prius* and that which knows as the *posterius*. If it is ideal, no *object* will correspond to it anywhere. Hence, finite representation is *no* absolute affirmation of what is known; by contrast, the representations of the absolute are real by nature, for it is proper to the nature of the absolute that it involves no affirmation that

would not immediately be also something affirmed. Finite beings have representations of things because they exist. With respect to the absolute, things exist because they are being affirmed by the idea of the absolute; to be sure, to say so in no way implies an origination or *becoming* of things by virtue of that affirmation. Much rather, the affirming and the affirmed are *equally eternal*, for the idea of God involves precisely this homology [*Gleichsein*] of the two, rather than one of them preceding the other.

Addendum 1. Hence, self-knowledge must not be understood as an *activity*. For the self-knowledge of God is God's infinite self-affirmation. Yet this follows immediately from the idea of God according to which both, the affirming and the affirmed, are already absolutely One and do not merely become One through His activity. *Conversely*, the affirmation of Himself is not an activity of which God, as the affirmed, would be the product, for by virtue of His idea God as such is, without activity, already the eternal unity of the affirmative and the affirming. Hence, He becomes the affirmed no more than He *becomes* the affirming. Yet where no becoming exists, no activity exists either.

Addendum 2. God's self-knowledge cannot be conceived as a self-differentiation either. If we were to infer such a self-differentiation from the reality of the world, that which is presupposed as merely *grounded* or as the consequence, namely, the world, will once again become the ground, in fact, the determining ground for God to differentiate Himself.

The fact that the idea of God's eternal self-knowledge as the form of His Being was confused with this notion of a self-differentiation in God demonstrates only that the former idea was not understood. The self-knowledge of God = self-affirmation. As has been proven earlier, neither of these [is] a differentiation. By affirming *Himself*, God does not posit an affirming and an affirmed as distinct [or] as different, but he strictly posits *Himself* as that which affirms and is being affirmed.²¹

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Addendum 3. God's self-knowledge cannot be understood as a *self-emanation* [*Herausgehen aus sich selbst*] either. For this could happen only if He were to differentiate himself internally, which is impossible. All these misconceptions of the self-knowledge of God are rooted in precisely one erroneous presupposition, according to which this self-knowledge posits something subjective and objective, each by and for itself.

(21) Hence, *the self-knowledge of God posits neither something subjective nor something objective discretely*. For if we say, God as an absolutely monolithic [being] knows, i.e., affirms Himself, we clearly do not posit any knowing subject nor any known object as such, but we posit only *God* as the equally unified essence of the knowing and the known. Put differently, if God's self-

knowledge were to involve the position of something subjective and something objective, each as such, both would have to be posited as different from each other. However, the self-knowledge of God does not involve their position as distinct, because it is the position of God, hence, the position of their nondistinctness, not that of their distinctness.

6,172 **Conclusion 1.** Hence, with respect to God and—because what applies to God also applies universally—in a universal sense, there exists generally nothing subjective as such nor anything objective as such, but only their *unity*—God; and precisely by virtue of being their unity, He knows Himself.

Conclusion 2. With respect to its true essence or its Being, everything that is, is the absolute identity of the subjective and the objective, of the affirming and the affirmed; a subjective or objective entity, viewed discretely, *exists only to the extent that it is considered neither in itself nor with regard to its essence but only with regard to its formal difference* from the [respective other].

(22) *Reason is identical with the self-knowledge of God.* For reason is the same as God's self-affirmation, the latter being repeated in reason, which therefore is the immediate knowledge of God (see 8).

Addendum. Reason, too, knows neither something subjective as such nor anything objective as such but knows only the[ir] unity.

(23) *God cannot affirm Himself nor have knowledge of Himself in general without once again affirming Himself as the identity of the affirming and the affirmed, or of the subjective and the objective.* For God is His own affirmation; yet even as such he is being affirmed only by Himself, i.e., [is] once again the unity of the affirming and the affirmed. Thus in God we never happen upon an affirming or an affirmed, for in all directions he is merely the infinite affirmation of Himself.

6,173 **Addendum.** In self-knowledge God is therefore never purely subjective nor purely objective, but He is God as the subjective and the objective, i.e., the absolute identity of the subjective and the objective. There is nothing purely subjective which, being only subjective, would be opposed to something purely objective that is only objective; rather, each of these, the subjective or the knowing, and the objective, or the known, = God in His [Being qua] self-knowledge, and hence, each of them = the absolute identity of the subjective and the objective. Hence, in self-knowledge, no less than in self-affirmation, we posit not a simple identity but an identity of identity; the self-sameness of the subjective and the objective is posited as equal to itself [*wird sich selbst gleichgesetzt*], comes to know itself, and is its own subject and object.

Note. Just as God generally cannot know or affirm Himself without, in turn, being known by himself as one endowed with knowledge, and vice versa, the affirmation of the idea of God, who is the essence of reason, once again also posits immediately the affirmation of this affirmation; the same holds true for any other knowledge posited along with that immediate affirmation of the idea of God; which is to say, that once again we posit immediately with it the knowledge of Him, etc. All infinite regress ceases here. All *true* knowledge, i.e., all rational knowledge, is immediately also a *knowledge of this knowledge*, and if the absolute is the ground and the principle of all truth, I therefore know immediately, when possessing true knowledge, that I have such a knowledge; hence, absolute knowledge is possible only by virtue of the idea of God, that is, an absolute knowledge such as requires no further knowledge and affirms itself absolutely and in infinite repetition.²²

The preceding proposition can also be proven as follow: God has knowledge of *Himself*. However according to the previous (7), God *Himself* is nothing but the infinite affirmation, hence, also the infinite knowledge of Himself. For God to have knowledge of Himself means therefore that God knows Himself in an infinite manner as He who knows of Himself and as He who is *known*. Hence, He is equally absolute as one and the other.

Conclusion. There exists one and the same, equally absolute, identity of the subjective and the objective, which is posited in the self-knowledge of God as the subjective and objective. (This proposition states positively what had previously (21) been stated negatively, [and] it is furthermore an immediate consequence of the preceding.)

(24) *God is the absolute universe immediately, [that is,] by virtue of the self-affirmation of His idea; and the total iniverse in turn is nothing but the infinite self-affirmation of God and* (because, according to the definition in 7, God is nothing but precisely that infinite affirmation of Himself) [it is] *God Himself*. *Proof.* First, God is, for the self-affirmation of God immediately implies an *infinity*, because God (16) is His own infinite position; and such [infinity] follows from it infinitely, because in God there is no affirmation that would not once again be *affirmed* as such and that, conversely penetrates itself—such that infinity begets itself. (I remind the reader of the previous explanations concerning the concept of infinity. Truly infinite is only that which exists by virtue of an *absolute position* and without any limitation.) The self-affirmation of God does not merely entail a *generally infinite* reality, but the latter follows an infinite manner, just as an organic body is not merely organic, but is so in an infinite manner, so that the organic begets itself and each part, when traced ad infinitum, proves one again organic, i.e., possesses the nature of the whole. Moreover, (a) infinite reality is in and of itself already and intrinsically = totality. For as certain as it is infinite, there also does not exist anything outside of it [reality]; and that outside of which nothing else exists is

6,175 necessarily totality. However, (b) the self-affirmation of God not only entails infinite reality as such, but it [does so] *in an infinite manner*. In other words, *everything* that is possible by virtue of the self-affirmation of God will also immediately exist by virtue of it. Yet that wherein all possibilities are actualities is necessarily of a nature that lacks nothing; it is the totality [All] not because nothing is outside of it, but because in it all possibility is actual. Hence God, by virtue of his self-affirmation, is also immediately the total whole, the universe, not merely as that outside of which nothing is, but also as that wherein all possibility is actuality. [Proof,] second part, the total universe is the infinite self-affirmation of God, or on account of 7, [it is] God Himself. For, in general, everything that follows from God does so by virtue of the mere law of identity, i.e., in such a manner that it is cognate to [God] Himself. Hence, as we saw, infinity or the total universe follow from the self-affirmation of God, i.e., (7), from God Himself in an infinite manner. Hence the total universe exists.

This proposition can also be proven as follows: God affirms Himself; yet because He is infinite, He also affirms Himself as infinite reality and (because all affirmation is again affirmative in Him, just as each affirmed is affirming) in an infinite manner. An infinite reality that is affirmed in an infinite manner, then, is = the total universe. Hence God affirms Himself as the total universe, and the latter is that which God affirms. However, because there is nothing affirmed in God that would not be immediately affirming as such, totality as something affirmed is immediately also the affirming, i.e., = God; hence, too, God is also = the universe, and there is no opposition but only an absolute identity between these two. Only now do we understand what is meant with the [being] *All* and vice versa.

6,176 (25) *All is One, or totality [All] is unconditionally One*. [This is the case] not merely in a numerical sense, for the numerical determination applies to totality no more than to God. That totality is One means that it is absolutely *monolithic*. For (negative proof), (a) it cannot originate by way of *combination*, because that from which it originated would once again be either = totality, in which case it could not be a part, or would not be = totality, i.e., a negation of totality. In that case, the universe, which is in its very nature an absolute position, would have to be composed of its own negations, which is an absurdity. (Ordinarily, however, totality is being conceived only as something combined, as the paradigm of finite things that are only united into a whole in it. According to its true idea, totality is an absolute, monolithic [*theilloses*] whole that precedes all parts in the same way in which infinite space precedes individual spaces). Yet if totality is indeed not a combination, it will be strictly and absolutely One. (b) Positive proof: for the universe is posited by the indivisible positions of the idea of God, and it is itself only this position of the idea of God (as demonstrated); just as the latter is necessarily One, the universe, too, [is One]. Put differently, because everything that is is by virtue

of one indivisible position, the true universe contains nothing discrete or successive; rather, everything that follows in an infinite manner from the idea of God, is by virtue of this idea and in the self-knowledge of God, hence generally and in itself One—not manifold.

Explanation. In the phenomenal world, we *distinguish* between different things and forms, and we ourselves claim that infinity follows from God in an *infinite manner*. However, *that* which follows from God in an infinite manner and which therefore may assume a different appearance is nevertheless One in the absolute position of the infinite reality, i.e., as regards the idea of God Himself. There does not exist some particular position, e.g., one that results in the remoter appearance of organic nature and another one that results in inorganic nature, but all these are only posited by one indivisible position, and hence they are posited only as One. Reality, in its entirety and infinity, and in all the modes of its affirmation by the idea of God, is *One*. Totality, then, is not simply innate but is also intrinsically *unified*, namely, [as] one indivisible position of the infinite reality of God.

(26) *The One is all.* For only God is absolute and by and for Himself One; and this *One* not only affirms itself as strictly infinite but does so also in an infinite manner, i.e., as the universe, and this affirmed is one with the affirming. Hence the affirming, as the *One*, is simultaneously [and] immediately also totality [All] and, with the *One* being posited, totality, too, has been posited.

Philosophy, then, is the presentation of the self-affirmation of God in the infinite fertility of its consequences; that is, the presentation of the *One* as totality. Conversely, and for the same reason, [philosophy] is the presentation of totality as it emanates immediately from God's self-affirmation as His own, eternal identity—hence [it is] presentation of totality as the *One*, and all philosophical and rational cognition is grounded in *this* identity of totality and oneness.

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(27) *God is not the cause of the universe but the universe itself.* By cause I here understand something affirming that differs from its affirmed. However, the universe, as the affirmed, does not differ from God as the affirming, [and] thus God does not relate to it qua causality but qua a complete identity. The universe is not a *becoming*, it is immediately with God. Given that the reality of the universe is one with that of God, how could there exist yet another totality outside the latter whose explanation would require a separate causality? Is there not, instead, only *one* universe, and is not that other universe, that which does not immediately follow from the idea of God, strictly a nonentity and a complete nonbeing?

Conclusion. *The universe is coeternal with God;* for only God is by virtue of the eternal affirmation of Himself, i.e., He is only as the universe: God Himself, however, is eternal (13), [and] hence the universe, too, is eternal.

6,178 It will be argued that all of this amounts to [a] *Pantheism*. Yet even if we were to consider it a Pantheism in accordance with *your* definition, what would this be?²³ Assuming that precisely this system and none other would follow from Reason itself, would I not have to proclaim it to be the only true [system], regardless of your apprehensions? The basest form of polemic in philosophy relies on certain horrifying images that have been gleaned from the history of philosophy and are now being raised against any new system like the heads of Medusa. What, then, are we to understand by *Pantheism*? If I am correct, it [denotes] simply the conception according to which the totality [*Allheit*] of God comprises everything, i.e., all *sensible* things taken collectively. This, to be sure, is not at all what we are talking about here, and far from claiming that some such accumulation be God, we notice instead that it is *sensible* only because it [is] a privation of God.

(28) Like the universe, *substance, the essence of all Being, is strictly indivisible*. For if we posit that the essence of all Being could itself be divided, then the parts would either retain or not retain the nature of this essence. In the first case, they would thus be infinite and absolute of themselves, i.e., there would be several absolutes, which is an absurdity. In the second case, substance, the essence of all Being, would effectively cease to exist, which is equally incongruous. For the individual entity that exists can cease to exist whereas *Being* itself is necessarily eternal and immutable. The essence of all Being, then, is strictly indivisible; the same [hold true] for the universe. For the universe is God as the infinite affirmation of *Himself*, nothing outside of that. Hence, if the universe, as such, were divisible, the parts would either have to be negations of the universe, and the universe would be composed of negations of itself, which is absurd according to (25), or each one of these parts would once again be for itself the infinite affirmation of itself, i.e., each would be the universe for itself and *not* a part of it. In this case, too, the universe as such is strictly indivisible.

6,179 **Note.** Whatever else is being divided, the absolute substance itself is never divided. Hence, if we speak of an entity as being infinitely divisible, that which is being divided is certainly not the corporeal *substance itself* but, rather, the negation of the former. Reflection, however, generally does not know substance *in itself* but only to the extent that [substance] is being posited at once together with the accidents [*Affektionen*] or determinations, i.e., with negation. Matter, with respect to substance, is everywhere One, and no part can be distinguished in it except insofar as it is posited with different accidents. Thus water, for example, may be divided as such, just as it can appear and disappear as such; however, insofar as it does neither appear nor disappear as regards its substance, it cannot be divided as substance either. Instead, the *absolute indivisibility* of matter with regard to its *essence* is itself the ground for its infinite divisibility in form or accident. For that an entity appears infinitely

divisible for me has its reason in the fact that, when infinitely divided, the substance or essence always remains the same. If it were possible to arrive, by way of division, at a difference of substance or at a truly qualitative opposition, the division would indeed prove necessary. However, the infinite divisibility of entities effectively negates any divisibility that concerns their substance, and hence we cannot infer from [this divisibility] the divisibility of substance itself.

Addendum. Nothing that is can, to the extent that it is, be annihilated; for all that exists is, insofar as it is, One, namely, the absolute identity. This [identity], however, cannot be annihilated, either partially or completely; *not in its entirety*, because (9) it cannot be negated anywhere and in no manner, and it is (6) the immediate consequence of the absolute position of the idea of God; *not in its parts*, for it is independent of all quantity; hence, if [this identity] could be negated even in one part of the whole, it would be negated in general or absolutely: to put it differently, it would require no more to annihilate it completely than to annihilate it in some part.

(29) *Hence we can nowhere in the universe conceive of an essential or qualitative difference.* A qualitative difference, for example, would be posited if the subjective and the objective could differ with respect to their *essence* or substance. However, the subjective and the objective are only *the same*, and besides their infinite identity there is nothing in and of itself; hence, too, nothing subjective or objective can be posited into infinity as something discrete, but everything that exists in the universe is, to the extent that it is, necessarily the universal, eternally same, indivisible essence of all Being. Hence no essential difference is conceivable within the universe.²⁴

(30) *Explanation.* A quantitative or inessential difference would prevail if we were to posit the same and identical essence of God, i.e., the same infinite unity of the affirming and the affirmed, to be sure, yet with a dominance either of that which affirms or that which is being affirmed.

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Note. This quantitative difference could extend into infinity, irrespective of the internal unity of essence, because infinity follows in an infinite manner from the self-affirmation of God, and because in God the affirming and His being affirmed are, once again, themselves being infinitely affirmed. This difference, then, should be called quantitative, because it does not affect the essence, which is always the indivisible, self-same substance of the absolute itself, and because it affects merely the positional *mode* [*die Art des Gesetzseins*].

(31) *As regards the universe itself, seen as such, even this quantitative difference is inconceivable.* For by virtue of God's infinite affirmation of Himself, nothing is being posited in *particular* according to our earlier proposition; neither the affirming nor the affirmed, nor the affirmation of this affirmation

are being posited as such, but all of these are posited, by virtue of the same indivisible position, as the same affirmation of God; i.e., *only the universe as such*, is being posited, yet not this or that particular mode within the infinite affirmation of God, but this infinite affirmation itself in the infinity of its modes is posited as the *unity*, i.e., as the totality of the universe. Hence, if there inheres a quantitative difference in the universe or in the perspective, which is not the perspective of the absolute position but that of something comprised by the universe—namely, in such a way that the One and self-identical essence of God is posited everywhere as *the same*, to be sure, though preferably *under* the form of the affirmed or the affirming—there nevertheless cannot exist a quantitative difference *with respect to totality itself* (an expression to which I urge the reader to pay close attention).

6,181 **Addendum.** *Whatever is posited as a quantitative difference is posited, with respect to the universe, only as (relatively) negated—as non-ens.* It is strictly one and the same affirmation, one stroke so the speak, whereby the universe and the particular are being posited. The universe = God, as intuited in the infinite consequences of his idea, [and] all these consequences are simultaneous; however, precisely because they are only in simultaneity, [that is], only by virtue of an indivisible position, their particularity inheres in the universe, and yet it is also not. It is to the extent that it is permeated by the infinite concept of God and the universe, and *it is not* to the extent that it is something for itself. All *particularity*, which is being posited as such, as quantitative difference (for [there is] no particularity by means of qualitative difference), is hence also being posited immediately as a relative negation in relation to the universe. *Precisely this Being and this relative nonbeing [Nichtseyn] of the particular in the universe constitute the seed of all finitude.*

Explanation. If the particulars of the universe were particulars *for themselves*, the universe would be their mere *paradigm [Inbegriff]* or their composite. However, the particulars *are* not primordial but constitute only the infinite affirmation, namely, by being themselves infinite. There is only the universe qua universe. By virtue of the existence of the universe, the particular forms, too, are being posited within the universe, though they are also *not* because the universe only posits them as *dissolved within itself*, that is, disregarding their particular reality. Precisely because the universe precedes the particulars, it posits them exclusively as dissolved within itself, and for this very reason it also does **not** posit them for it does not posit any of them according to their particular nature. Hence we can not only say that the universe, by virtue of containing all forms, is none of them *in particular* but also that, precisely in containing *all* of them, it is none of them. It contains all of them, however, as [their] absolute and indivisible unity or as [their] strictly monolithic position, and it does not contain them, precisely because it contains them only as *unity*, i.e., as absolutely dissolved. Put differently, what do we generally understand

when we speak of a *particularity*? Even for a subordinate reflection, it is *nothing in itself*, not substance, but it is merely a form or an ideal determination. What makes the *plant* a plant is not the substance, for the plant shares substance with all other natural beings; conversely, the plant is neither real nor something in and of itself, but it is strictly a concept or a schematism of the imagination.²⁵ Likewise, *this* mode of being, irrespective of the required number of intermediary links, is derived from the *infinite affirmation* of the idea of God, and *it is* in these concepts, yet it does not evolve [from them] as *this* particular mode of Being. For by virtue of the infinite affirmation there is also only the infinite in its absolute unity; i.e., the universe. Hence there is nothing in the universe or in the absolute as regards its *particularity* or its *mode* [of Being]; only that is proper to the universe which has been penetrated by the concept of the latter, saturated by infinity, and dissolved into totality. This dissolution is the *true* identity of the infinite and the finite. The finite is *only* in the infinite, yet precisely thereby it ceases to exist as the finite. However, as this identity of the infinite with the finite is being postulated in contrast to reflection, for which the particular is the Real, reflection will recognize that two opposed things are being united, to be sure, though not that both of these, precisely by virtue of being united, also divest themselves of those properties that they have only *outside* of this union and by virtue of opposing one another.²⁶ Hence, if reflection is expected to restore the finite [and] particular to the universe from which these have been derived, it recognizes the nature of its task, though it does not know how [to do it]; it does not comprehend that in this renewed dissolution what is being restored will lose precisely what reflection had obtained only through and in the process of disjunction. For reflection, then, this identity of the finite with the infinite remains a mere *synthesis* rather than a genuine dissolution of one into the other.

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(32) *The derivation of all things as regards their Being is an eternal derivation.* For between God and the universe, hence also between God and the things to the extent that they *are* in the universe, no other relation can prevail but one that conforms to the principle of identity: $A = A$. For everything emanates from the idea of God by virtue of the mere law of identity. As we saw, this law contains an eternal truth, which also includes the relation of things to God—because they can be only *in* God, and because they can be only by virtue of God's infinite affirmation—and it [elucidates why] the derivation of all things from God is an eternal derivation. All things, then, can be contemplated adequately only from the viewpoint of their eternal derivation, that is insofar as they have their Being in God. Each entity bears an immediate relation to God by means of *Being* itself [*durch das Seyn als solches*], irrespective of whether it is being determined, with view to its existence or efficacy, as a nonbeing or as a mere non-ens.

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(33) *The essentiality of things as they are grounded in the eternity of God = Ideas.*²⁷ This preceding proposition demonstrates that things bear an eternal

relation to God as regards their Being or their pure position. We shall now determine with greater specificity how things attain this immediate relation to God and how they are grounded in His eternity. Nothing in the universe has a *particular* essentiality; much rather, the essence, the in-itself of all things is the universe itself, and everything, to the extent that it is in the universe, is itself *strictly a presentation of the universe*; hence [it is] not the particular thing, for as such it would have to be *not* universal. It follows that when we speak of the *essentiality* of things, we do not understand this as a difference inherent in *essence itself*, but merely as a difference of that to which this [essence] refers. To the extent that the above proposition contains merely a statement, no further proof is required, but only an explanation. First, then, I shall remark that by *idea*, here and subsequently, I do not understand the mere mode of *thinking*, as the term is generally understood (even in Spinoza); instead, I understand the *idea* (following its original meaning) as the archetype [*Urgestalt*], as the essence or heart of things, so to speak: it is that [aspect] of things which is neither merely subjective, like the concept, the mode of thinking, nor merely objective, like the thing purely in itself; instead [it is] the absolute identity of these two aspects.

6,184 In short, I claim that what is genuinely Real in all things is strictly their *idea*, or the complete ideality of the universal and the particular, and I refer back to (31), where I show that the particular and finite in the universe can be only to the extent that each is entirely dissolved into the universal; however, what is dissolved into the universal and infinite is precisely the *idea*, and only the *idea* of a thing bears an immediate relation to God and thus is *real*. We claim that the *idea* is the complete identity of the particular with its *universal* [*mit seinem Allgemeinen*]. Yet the universal of every entity is One, namely, the universe [*All*] itself; hence we must demonstrate that each particular is precisely identical with, and dissolved into, the universe insofar as it is identical with, and dissolved into, its universal. This is indeed the case. Let us begin with the opposition between the particular and its universal, to see how the former is dissolved into the latter, and thereby is dissolved into the universe. What, then, is it that confers specificity and particularity onto a given plant, for example? It is simply the fact that, in and of itself, the [plant] does not offer the perfect representation of its universal concept, for it is only in part what, according to its concept, it could be. In short, it is the negation of its universal concept. In all things, we merely contemplate the universal or the concept, albeit in its negation. Thus the particular plant is nothing but the intuition, the negated intuition, of the concept of the plant. However, we furthermore recognize the *universal concept* as that of a given particular only to the extent that this *particular* is being looked at as the negation of the former, not as [something] in itself. The concept of the *plant*, for example, is possible only to the extent that the latter is not adequate to its concept, that is, to the extent that the affirmed is not the universe, as is the affirming.²⁸ For if we

posit the particular as being entirely identical with, and dissolved into, its concept, then this concept is also immediately the concept of the universe, that is, an infinite and eternal form. What is essential in the plant other than the eternal procreation and affirmation of itself[?] We have an intuition of the plant's essence (i.e., of the *universe itself*) in the form of the plant's eternal self-creation; this concept and essence of the universe by virtue of which it procreates itself infinitely, achieves distinctness as the concept of the *plant* only by means of negation, i.e., when we *no longer* conceive of it as the concept of the universe. Hence the plant is nothing positive as such, nothing "in-itself," [but] in its particularity it is only by virtue of the mere negation of the "in-itself," of the idea, which is the infinite concept [or] the concept of the universe.

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If, then, the essences of things = Ideas, [namely,] as grounded in the eternity of God, philosophy as the science of things in themselves will necessarily be the science of ideas, a science that subsists exclusively in the identity of the universal and the particular. For the idea is the complete identity of the particular with its universal. Ordinary reflection, which is the opposite of philosophy, thus remains necessarily in an antithetical relation to the universal and the particular.²⁹ It knows the universal and the particular only as two relative negations, by [conceiving of] the universal as the relative negation of the particular, which thus proves without reality, whereas the particular [is seen as] the relative negation of the universal. From this standpoint, the universal concept appears completely empty; it remains, for example, forever impossible to conceive of any *authentic* substance on the basis of the *concept* of substance, because to posit substance as such, something independent of the concept must be added. By contrast, universal concepts are simultaneously also the *Real* in the universe, for they inhere in the universe as forms that constitute the entire essence of the universe itself, so that essence and form, universal and particular are here completely the same. To ask whether the ideas are once again subjective or objective makes no sense, for such a question can be posed only by someone who remains entirely caught up in reflection. He knows of the universal only as a mental construct, the product of an abstraction, and the particular only as some *real* entity [*das Reelle*] without realizing that the particular, too, originates only by abstracting from the essence, and hence no less a mental construct than the former.³⁰ In its ordinary sense, logic is simply the doctrine by means of which the universal is considered in its opposition to the particular, i.e., its emptiness, an emptiness to which only an equally empty particular, namely, the physical particular can be opposed.³¹ Here lie also the roots for the misconstrual of the Platonic doctrine of ideas. Most historiographers of philosophy understood these ideas either as mere logical abstractions or, alternatively, as true and corporeal entities.

Kant must be credited with having restored the word *ideas* to *language*, namely, as designating something higher than what is denominated by the

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words *concept* and *representation*. He was the first to remind us that what the *ideas* signify has not been derived from the senses but, in fact, transcends the concepts of the understanding, that is, the categories, insofar as the ideas are not even concepts of a possible experience but concepts that extend beyond all experience. He remarks that, according to Plato, the [ideas] emanate from the supreme Reason, and that they have been imparted to human reason, which, however, after the loss of its primordial disposition, can remember the old, now dim ideas only with great difficulty; hence it becomes the task of philosophy to cultivate this remembrance.³² To be sure, Kant considers that last notion but a mystical exaggeration for which Plato begs our indulgence, and Kant concludes by expressing his hope that the elevated language employed by Plato in this context may be replaced by humbler terms that will prove more adequate to the nature of the matter; for the same reason, he also hopes that we can now understand Plato better than he was capable of understanding himself, though he does not offer any particular proof on this occasion.³³ Now, Kant accords the ideas no reality except insofar as they are moral by nature: in part, the capacity of ideas to surpass all experience becomes more immediately apparent and possesses greater evidence in the moral sciences than elsewhere, so that they will be less frequently misconstrued; on the other hand, this restriction of the ideas to the moral domain is entirely consistent with Kant's thought. For, being unaware of any higher standpoint, he considers everything from the standpoint of reflection where the question necessarily arises as to whether the ideas might not be mere mental constructs; and only because this question regarding the moral ideas is already impeded by its mode of appearance in the soul (which is that of an absolute compulsion [*Nöthigung*]), and because his entire philosophy is guided by reflection, Kant feels constrained to accord these ideas absolute reality. However, it is apparent that if the moral ideas are not mere mental constructs, and if, as *ideas*—and precisely because they are such—they possess unconditional reality, this [qualification] must prove universally valid; hence, if *morality* constitutes at all times only one dimension of the intellectual world, it is generally impossible to challenge the *absolute* reality of the ideas on the ground that they *might* be mere mental constructs. For it must be generally possible, [i.e.,] with regard to all ideas and the absolute in general, to overcome this vain instinct of selfhood, which converts everything into *its* product—once it has been overcome with regard to some specific idea; and it is equally irrational to regard the moral or the so-called theoretical ideas as mere mental constructs.

Addendum. By virtue of the self-affirmation of the absolute, whereby the latter eternally conceives the universe in itself and is this universe itself, the *particulars* of the universe, too, are granted a *double life*, a life in the absolute—which is the life of the idea, and which accordingly was also

characterized as the dissolution of the finite in the infinite and of the particular in the universal—and a life in *itself*—which, however, is only proper to the [particular] merely to the extent that it is simultaneously dissolved into the universe, [for] in its separation from the life in God the latter is a mere semblance of life. Only that which is absolute can be in the absolute, [for] the universe tolerates only what is autonomous. Precisely by virtue of its dissolution into infinite universality [*Allseyn*], the particular attains an *absolute life* [and] is inherently absolute, though only to the extent that it is in the universe; it cannot be simultaneously absolute and partake of particular existence as something particular; even as the particular of the universe, this [particular] can only live the life of the universe. Any particular is being created and annihilated in the course of God's eternal self-affirmation through one act, for it is no particular life, separable from the universe, but has life precisely and only in the universe (fulguration: expulsion and retraction). This life in the universe, then, this *essentiality* of things, as they are grounded in the eternity of God, is the *idea*, and the *Being of this idea in the universe constitutes Being with respect to the idea*.

(34) *The relative nonbeing of the particular with respect to the universe can be referred to as the mere appearance in contradistinction to the idea.*

Explanation. Particularity or difference in general—the two being the same thing—can never be qualitative according to (29), but must prove strictly quantitative. However, even the latter has been negated with regard to the universe by (31); that is, it is a mere nonbeing relative to the universe. Hence the absolute positing of the universe is also relative nonpositing of this quantitative difference, i.e., of the particular as particular (a “relative” one, because the particular is not negated absolutely and in every respect, but only in its being—for-itself, in its *own* life, though not in its life within the universe). Furthermore (according to 31: *Addition*) everything that is posited as quantitative difference is, as such, immediately posited as not real in-itself; for, because the in-itself obtains strictly in the universe, whatever is posited as nonbeing relative to the universe is also posited as not real in-itself. However, because consequently the particular as such merely lacks Being *in-itself*, i.e., is not with respect to the universe, we can refer to this relative nonbeing in relation to the universe as a Being after all, a [being] that is not the *true Being*, to be sure, but that instead constitutes mere appearance. (I urge you to take note of the logic of proof here.) For the time being, the particular is being negated only as an *in-itself*; thus it is not negated as something that is not in-itself, namely, as mere appearance; hence it can indeed also be characterized as such. However, whether it is or is not negated as something that is not in-itself remains yet to be seen.

(35) *Both the universe and the appearance are posited as equally eternal; or however eternal the universe may be, the appearance will be just as eternal, though*

as appearance. (The last phrase serves to refute the notion of an equal dignity of the two. The universe is unconditionally eternal, whereas the appearance is eternal only to the extent that the universe is, and yet this appearance is immediate and eternal together with the universe.³⁴

6,189 **Proof.** For the Being and Nonbeing of things is equally eternal in the idea of the universe, [i.e.,] the Being of the thing as idea [and] its Nonbeing as a particular thing. Yet this Nonbeing is a Nonbeing in relation to the universe; hence, when considered from an absolute *perspective*, it is indeed an absolute Nonbeing, [yet] when regarded in a nonabsolute perspective, it is also not an absolute Nonbeing but only a relative one; or, put differently, it is being negated with respect to the universe as an absolute Being, yet it is not negated as something nonabsolute: on the contrary, because it is eternally negated by the universe as an absolute Being, it exists as the nonabsolute or inauthentic Being, and thus is posited as appearance.

Conclusion. The idea and the appearance of the idea are posited as *equally* eternal, or along with the positing of the idea, the appearance, too, has been posited, though only as appearance; that is, the appearance is not without the idea but only to the extent that the idea exists, and yet it is equally eternal. The idea thus precedes appearance only as regards its concept and not with regard to time.

Hence, when called upon to *deduce appearance* as a positive reality, philosophy cannot possibly accomplish this task. However, if the task is to deduce appearance as *appearance*, as an inauthentic reality, we can clearly no longer speak of a deduction precisely because appearance as such, i.e., as inauthentic Being, is necessarily being invested with the same eternity with which it will be negated as an authentic or absolute Being. Our next task will be to exhibit the concrete determinations of precisely this relative Nonbeing of all particularity, i.e., its Being as something nonabsolute, which is one with its Nonbeing as something absolute.

6,190 (36) *The relative Nonbeing of the particular with respect to the universe, when understood as a relative Nonbeing, is the concrete and authentic thing [Seyn].* This we could prove by showing that what we regard as the determinations of the individual, particular thing and what reflection indeed regards as *positive* determinations of the latter are in truth only expressions of its relative Nonbeing; hence, we certainly do not recognize the particular and authentic thing, which is the essence of these determinations, as something positive but, in truth, we shall recognize it as a mere Nonbeing with respect to the universe, thereby rendering Nonbeing [and] negation as the true essence [*das wahre Wesen*] of this thing; in this case, however, we would have to *presuppose* those determinations or derive them from reflection; it is methodologically more proper, however, to deduce these determinations from the presupposed

concept of the *individual thing* as such (whose substance is constituted of mere Nonbeing), rather than vice versa. Hence we offer the following, brief demonstration. Any relative Nonbeing invariably implies some relative Being. That which, *in relation* to something, is *absolutely not*, e.g., with respect to the universe, cannot be absolutely devoid of Being when considered *independent* of the universe, for otherwise it would, in fact, have to be absolute *with respect* to the universe. However, when considered irrespective of the latter, Nonbeing cannot be absolute either, because what has strictly no being in relation to something else can never and under no circumstances become absolute. Hence, with respect to the universe, it can neither *be* absolute, nor can it *not be* in an absolute sense; in short, it can 'be' or 'not be' only in a relative sense. Hence the relative Nonbeing implies a likewise relative Being, which came first. Conversely, then, everything to which we accord relative Being partially *is* and partially *is not*; it is therefore a mixture of reality and negation, it is something *limited, some concrete, individual, or in ordinary language, some authentic thing*. The particular as *particular* is a relative Nonbeing with respect to the idea, and thus, in accordance with the proof that we have just provided, it is in part Being, and in part Nonbeing, and therefore, a concrete or real thing.

Consequence. *The particular, authentic thing is the appearance of the idea;* for appearance is what is not authentic with respect to the idea or the universe (34). The particular [and] concrete thing, however, is in truth nothing else but the Nonbeing of the particular relative to the idea; hence [it is] appearance.

(37) *The idea is eternally One: that which relates to the idea as a relative Nonbeing or as negated form, the concrete thing, [or] appearance, is necessarily not One but manifold.* The idea is (1) absolutely One, for (to select the most concise proof) it is absolutely identical, and free of all difference, with the universe. Yet if indeed the idea is absolutely One, then it is necessarily again also the whole [*Alles*]. It is the universe in its kind. The idea, too, is again inherently the absolute position of the infinite reality; it encompasses all difference, i.e., all of its own particular consequences, just as the universe encompasses all the particular consequences that follow from the idea of God; namely, *they inhere* in the idea, and they do not inhere in it. The *do inhere* in it to the extent that they have dissolved into their own infinity, as a strictly identical and indivisible position, and they do *not* inhere in it with regard to their particularity. If the idea is in itself once again the universe, in contradistinction to appearance or the concrete as the merely particular in its Nonbeing—relative to the universe of the idea—then the particular is also by necessity not One but a *multiplicity* [*Vieles*], because it cannot be a universal [*All*] and because the particular, when dissolved into the idea, is *infinite*, necessarily infinite or, to be more precise, because it is indeterminably multiple.

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Conversely, the multiple nature of the concrete constitutes not a positive quality either but amounts strictly to an expression of its Nonbeing with respect to the universality of the idea; put differently, the concrete is the expression of the fact that it [can]not constitute the universality of the idea. Everything that can be *multiple* is, to that extent, merely an individual form, a mutable though inauthentic figuration [*Gestalt*] of the idea, thus containing no inherent reality. The *individual* human being, for example, is such an individual not by virtue of the idea but, rather, because he is not the idea but its negation. Being can only be One, whereas the Nonbeing is indeterminably multiple. The infinite reality whereby the idea of man is linked with God always achieves but a partial expression in each individual human being, i.e., it [involves] negation. Hence the concrete is also a multiplicity precisely because it is not *truth*. There is only *One* idea which is the truth of every concrete [thing], and for the same reason the concrete, considered in-itself, is *nothing*. For if it were not *nothing*, it would be the One itself. For the idea admits of no division such as [would be required] to deduce the multiplicity but, on the contrary, it is as indivisible as the universe. Hence there is no possible ground for multiplicity except a negative one, namely, that the multiple nature of the concrete is merely the expression of its relative Nonbeing with regard to the idea. There is no multiplicity in and of itself, [but] such multiplicity is only the determination of what is *not*. Thus we have simultaneously uncovered the source of the concepts of quantity.

Addendum 1. *Neither unity nor multiplicity contain anything proper to the essence of the thing. Both are mere forms of abstraction from the universe; i.e., [they are] forms of Nonbeing. By referring to a thing as one, in the numerical sense, I neither add anything to nor state anything about its essence whatsoever; instead, unity is a mere mode or form of separating or discriminating one thing from others, and thus it is evidently of a merely negative quality.*

Nor does the concept of multiplicity add anything to the essence of things for it, too, is only a form of discriminating that which *in-itself*, i.e., according to its idea, is One, yet which is being posited precisely by means of this discrimination (e.g., if I count) as that which is not idea but rather a Nonbeing.

Addendum 2. *The addendum between the universal and the particular, as it is applied to the concrete, contains nothing positive, but it, too, expresses a mere negation. It is in the idea and in God that essence and Being are one. The idea does not have an existence that differs from the essence, but its very essence is this Being, [and] Being is not derived from it. In the case of the concrete [thing], however, Being does not follow from the essence (e.g., a concrete substance never follows from the essence of substance). However, to*

say that Being does not follow from essence is to say that such Being is no Being *in-itself* but a negation of essence, negation of the *in-itself*. Indeed, the opposition between the universal and the particular is coterminous with the difference between essence and Being. Hence the former opposition, too, expresses merely a negation, namely, that Being is not *essence* itself but its negation. It follows (and this is a resulting principle of philosophy) *that everything for which a universal concept is possible is, precisely for this reason, nothing in-itself*. Precisely therefore, no universal concept exists for God or the universe, for here Being is essence itself. For example, I can arrive at a universal concept of man only to the extent that no particular will completely coincide with the universal; yet this universal that I oppose to the particular constitutes a relative negation, namely, of the particular. By contrast, the *idea* is the *infinite* position of the particular, and hence it is neither a universal nor a particular properly speaking, but is [their] absolute identity. All of these concepts, then, which are determinations of the concrete or which exist only in relation to the concrete, are not positive determinations, [because] they do not add anything to the essence of the thing but rather *detract* from it; likewise, *privation* or negation add nothing to the thing but instead posit a *meram carentiam*, [i.e.,] nothing positive in it. Consequently, in and of themselves, they are strictly nothing.

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(38) *Form and substance are one in the idea, whereas in the concrete thing they necessarily differ from one another*. For no individual thing exists with respect to its substance or by virtue of it, [but] its Being is grounded in its form. For, substance being indifferent, only the form distinguishes one thing from another. In the case of the idea, however, *Being* does not differ from essence but is this essence itself; for the idea is as infinite with regard to its Being or *form* as it is infinite with regard to its *essence*. Hence the idea involves no difference between the two; by contrast, the individual thing necessarily involves a difference between the two, for here form or *Being* are much rather the negation of the substance, i.e., [this] is no *true Being*.

Addendum. The difference between substance and form in the concrete [thing], or the opposition between substance and accident in which the former endures while the latter changes, expresses a mere negation of true Being and nothing positive about the thing (here form is not essential to Being [but is] mere *accident*).

(39) *No individual entity contains the ground for its existence in itself*. For otherwise all Being would have to follow from its own idea or its own *essence*, i.e., it would be identical with these. This, however, is not the case according to what has been observed previously. For regarding its *essence*, everything is only One, and hence the essence of an individual thing (e.g., the essence or the idea of *man*) can never contain the reason for the existence of this thing

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as an individual one (e.g., the individual human being); hence the individual thing does not contain the ground for its own Being in itself.

Addendum. This determination of individual entities finds its own expression as *negation*, and hence it requires no further elaboration.

(40) *Each individual entity is determined by yet another one*, which in turn is again determined by yet another individual entity, etc. into infinity. For as an individual entity, it is not determined *by itself* because it does not contain the ground for its Being in itself. Its existence [*Dasein*], however, is not determined by God either; for *God* contains only the ground of totality, and He contains that of Being only to the extent that it is in totality; God does not, however, contain the ground of Being to the extent that it is not in totality, i.e., of the individual. Nor does [the latter] derive its ground from the idea, for as an absolute unity the idea, too, contains merely its own ground as a totality (that is, the idea, too, has Being only as the *universe in accordance with its own kind*). Hence, because the individual entity is derived neither from God nor from the idea (for neither God nor the idea can be understood as the ground of negation), its existence can be motivated only by something that is likewise *negation* of the idea and of totality, i.e., by another individual entity; for the same reason, however, this other entity must once again be determined by another one, etc. into infinity.

6,195 **Addendum.** With this proposition we have finally established the supreme negation of all finite being, and it almost requires no further proof [to say] that such a determination of the individual entity by another entity, which in turn is again determined in the same manner, constitutes the complete negation of all *true* Being. The ordinary mind, however, calls *actual* [*wirklich*] that which is determined—and *to the extent* that it is determined—in its existence and efficacy by *something else*. In this case, to accord a thing actuality requires indeed that something be added that is independent of the concept of such a thing, i.e., something that is not comprehended by the concept of the thing but that determines this thing itself; the ordinary consciousness is willing to accord a thing reality only to the extent that such an extrinsic factor obtains. This conception, then, admits of no other Being than that of *the individual thing*, and with regard to the latter it is thoroughly justified in establishing such a *determination by some other being* as the condition of all reality. The reality of the individual thing is grounded precisely in nonreality, and the latter finds no more adequate expression than that of such an [extrinsic] determination. That is, this determination, which generally appears as the *law of causality*, is the supreme expression of negation [and] of the Nonbeing of the thing.

(1) For it is by virtue of this determination that the immediate relation of the thing to God and the idea is negated. However, because everything can

bear only a relation of immediacy to God, and because only that which bears this *immediate* relation to God, i.e., which follows from God by virtue of the law of identity, can be regarded as truly authentic, the nonreality of the individual thing as such has already been established beyond all doubt. The same is the case with regard to the idea. Far from saying anything positive regarding the thing, this law [of causality] states only something negative, namely, that nothing finite can ever originate as such from the absolute or be traced back to it.

(2) This determination posits an absolute negation of being *in-itself*, i.e., of the true Being of the individual thing as such. Hence regardless of what has been determined about the thing by means of the law of cause and effect, it will always and inevitably be the negation of its reality, i.e., that by virtue of which this thing is not. It is only following this shadow of reality, [i.e.,] by virtue of the nothing, that the things attain their distinctness. A nonessence seeks the reality that it lacks in another thing, which also lacks any reality of its own and thus seeks it in yet another thing. This infinite nexus of things by means of cause and effect is therefore only the testimony, so to speak, and the expression of a vanity to which they are all subject, and of a longing for the unity from which they have become separated and wherein alone everything is truth. This negation finds its expression both in a general and in an *infinite* manner; hence we find the phrase *etc. into infinity* commonly ascribed to the law of causality, which simply means that the individual finite being will never—into infinity—originate from the absolute nor be anything in itself.

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(3) Conversely, this law is an indirect affirmation of the proposition that only totality can truly be, and that everything which is not totality is immediately posited as Nonbeing. Furthermore it is apparent that this law is not applicable to anything that is *in-itself* as well as that this law can determine the thing only according to its Nonbeing, to the extent that it is nothing, though not as truth [*wahrhaft*], i.e., as regards its reality. Thus one body can be the *cause* for the motion of another one, to be sure, yet it is only as a *body*, i.e., as nonessence, that the former can be the cause or the determining [factor] and that the latter can be determined by it. Essence, however, has not been explained in this way. Likewise, acid mixed together with alkali will produce a thermal effect in the latter, to be sure, and the latter has generally been explained as an effect of the former, though only from an inadequate perspective, i.e., one that makes the thing known only qua Nonbeing.

The preceding also provides us with the complete deduction of all the determination of the individual entity or appearance based on the presupposed concept of such a thing, namely, from the concept of a *Nonbeing* relative to totality; hence, too, we have shown that, because the individual thing is merely the focal point of all these determinations, it is a mere Nonbeing in its true essence, and that such Nonbeing constitutes indeed its true substance.

The determination of the individual entity has thus been completed. The following proposition shall serve as a transition to the next issue.

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(41) *The concrete thing as such, or together with that by means of which it is concrete, is a mere Nonbeing relative to totality; however, precisely by virtue of this characteristic [as Nonbeing] it is necessarily the reluctance or reflection [Widerschein oder Reflex] of totality.* The first part of this proposition follows from everything that has been said before. That the concrete thing *as such* is a mere Nonbeing means that aspect of the thing which renders it concrete is merely [its] Nonbeing (mere lack of power [*Ohnmacht*]), yet nothing real [and] nothing in-itself; hence, too, it is nothing concrete in itself. Yet it is the *infinite* affirmation of God, precisely in its infinity, i.e., the position of totality as totality [*des All als All*], and hence it is the universe itself through which the particular is being posited in its particularity. For according to (31), the absolute positing of totality immediately implies a relative nonpositing of the particular as such, i.e., the position of the universe as such and the position of the particular as Nonbeing constitute one indivisible act, namely, the eternal creation of the idea of God, whereby the universe is and the particular is not, whereby the universe is posited as totality and the particular, as such, is posited as *not real* in respect of the universe. Because it is the absolute position of the universe, i.e., the universe itself, by which the particular is being posited as mere Nonbeing, it follows that this Nonbeing as such, and precisely by virtue of the fact *that* it is a Nonbeing, is an *expression* of the universe, and the universe can be recognized in it, although not immediately, but in mediated form, i.e., by way of a reluctance or reflection—and with this we have finally established the entire significance of the *appearance*.

By reabsorbing and dissolving within itself each particular consequence of the idea of God, the infinite affirmation, like a flash of lightening, leaves behind only the lifeless shape, the shadow, the pure nothingness of the particular; yet precisely in this nothingness of the particular the universe finds its *most powerful* expression as the almighty, the innate, and the *eternal* substance.

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Just as the eye, in beholding its reflection in the mirror, posits itself [and] has an intuition of itself only to the extent that it posits the *reflecting* [medium], the mirror, as nothing in-itself, and just as it is effectively one act of the eye, whereby it posits itself, beholds itself, and does not posit or behold the reflecting [medium], so the universe, too, contemplates *itself* by not beholding or positing the particular discretely. Both are One act for it; the nonpositing of the particular is a contemplation and position of itself. And this is the explanation of philosophy's most sublime mystery, namely, how the eternal substance, or God, is not *modified* by the particular or appearance, but how it only *contemplates itself* and how it is as the *eternal, infinite substance*. To be sure, the reflecting [medium] appears only in a relative sense for the sensuous eye, because it continues to exist independent of the latter, e.g., for

the feeling. That part of the reflecting medium, however, which disappears with respect to the universe does so absolutely, and God only contemplates Himself in this [medium] as the innate, eternal, immutable substance. Already the ancients considered God strictly an eye, i.e., both the beholder and that which is beheld; His beholding is simultaneously His Being and vice versa, and whereas nothing that can be seen exists outside of Him, He is absolutely contemplative and contemplated. It is also this reflection of God in the finite world that enables us to know a thing as *real*, although in-itself it is strictly not real. Without the continuous illumination of the divine everything that appears to us as concrete would actually appear as pure *nothing*. Hence the immediate object of our knowledge remains forever positive, namely, God alone, and the knowledge of things originates in us precisely in the way their Being originates outside of us, namely, through a *privation* of knowledge. The fact that we nevertheless believe to know as something positive that which, properly speaking, is the very negation of the thing involves the same delusion that we also confront in individual spheres of knowledge, e.g., when we conceive of a limitation [*Grenze*], of coldness, or of darkness as something positive. Thus we say, for example, that we see the dark spots in the sun, although, in truth, they are not what is seen but rather that which is not seen, because they are obscure; the immediate object of our contemplation, then, will always be the light of the sun itself, and it is only by virtue of the latter that we can recognize those dark spots not as something real but as something nonreal. Consequently, all our sensory cognition as such is a noncognition, properly speaking, not a knowledge but a privation of knowledge—a conclusion that deviates greatly from Kant's philosophical doctrine, to be sure, because according to the latter we can have knowledge only of the sensible but not of the supersensible world. By contrast, we argue here that *all* sensory knowledge constitutes intrinsically a *negation* of knowledge, whereas only the essence, the in-itself, constitutes the positive object of knowledge, i.e., that of which we can properly have knowledge. However, as in the preceding example where the dark spots cannot appear independent of the sphere of light but only within it, [and] where they are therefore eternally conceived by the light only, without being anything in themselves, we likewise can know things in an authentic manner only in God and not *outside* of Him; for only to the extent that we know them in God will they impress themselves on us as privations, i.e., as what they are. Furthermore, just as the universe comes to know itself by positing the particulars as nothing, we come to know God as the exclusively eternal substance through the same position of the thing—namely, as privation.

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(42) *Explanation.* The cumulative totality of all things, to the extent that they are only in God, possess no Being in themselves and constitute a mere reflex of the universe in their Nonbeing, this cumulative totality is the reflected or represented world (*natura naturata*), whereas the universe, as the infinite affirmation of God,

or as that which contains all Being [in dem alles ist, was ist] is an absolute totality of creative nature (*natura naturans*).

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Thus far we have attained only a partial knowledge of nature and of the origin of particularity. The first and eternal origin of the particular we connected to the idea of God from which, because it is infinite, infinity derives in an infinite manner. The idea of God does not, however, affirm the particular consequence as such. Only the totality [*Allheit*] of these consequences is identical with the idea of God, and it is so only as a totality, i.e., to the extent that it is simultaneously an indivisible position, an absolute unity. The phenomenal world (*natura naturata*) is merely the stage on which things appear, not according to their Being in God but according to their own life and, precisely therefore, according to the law of nothingness, privation, and finitude. Thus we understand the general relation of the finite thing to the absolute, to be sure, though not their specific relation. We know that each particular thing that appears in finitude is a specific consequence of God Himself, although it can appear in its own life only under the aegis of privation. We have recognized all determinations of individual things as such a privation; for example, multiplicity, becoming and dissolution, etc. Still, we have not yet understood the reasons for the appearance of this particular, e.g., as the human body, as the plant, animal, etc. In short, we have thus far left unexamined how the particular—not according to its existence as appearance (which we explained in the course of our last investigation), but how it follows from the idea of God with regard to its concept or proper genus—and we must now address this issue that we had so far purposely omitted. To do so, we must recall the proposition that infinitude follows from the idea of God in an infinite manner. For here and only here is the solution of our present problem to be found. And yet, does it not appear readily impossible to deduce anything further from this proposition? For how can we exhaust the infinity of these consequences, and how can this primordial source of reality be traced in its countless manifestations? To put the question in this manner would indeed be irresponsible, if this infinity itself did not follow from the idea of God according to an eternal law, and if this law was not recognizable in the very idea of God. In the same manner, this being at least an example by analogy, the idea of number is infinitely fruitful; an infinity does indeed follow from this idea (and its particular kind) in an infinite manner. Thus the sequence of prime numbers is infinite, and yet it does not contain the totality of all numbers. The same is the case with second and third powers, which are also connected with the idea of number in a particular manner and which, although they constitute an infinite sequence, do not encompass all numbers. The mathematician is not concerned with the completeness of these sequences *a parte post*, which would be impossible, as long as he recognizes their infinity *a parte ante*, namely, by [understanding] the manner in which they emerge from the idea of number, and the law according to which they themselves progress. To [offer] another

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example, the mere *idea* of a space enclosed between two overlapping circles entails the affirmation of an infinity of differences that it would be futile to try to comprehend numerically, because this infinity of the idea cannot have any relation whatsoever to number; nevertheless, we can discover a law or a universal form for these differences, for the maximum and the minimum of the enclosed space can be determined and also the fact that the distance decreases in one direction with the same constancy with which it increases in the other direction. Just as it is certain that the very infinity of those sequences is a consequence of the laws of the idea, and that nothing but the idea is needed to comprehend them, it also follows that the eternal law of these ideas must also be knowable in the idea of God. Following the monolithic nature of the idea of God, there can exist only one kind of sequence, branching out into infinity and entailing, in each of these branches, *once again* an infinity, itself infinitely diversified. The following propositions may help us explore this issue:

(43) *God as an infinite affirmation of Himself is neither something affirming in particular nor something affirmed, nor is He the indifference of these two, but He comprehends all these forms in the infinity of His affirmation as an indivisible position.* The first part of this proposition merely resumes (18) where we had shown that there is not only no opposition between the affirming and the affirmed as such (because both are strictly the same, namely God), but God Himself is not one or the other discretely or their unity either; the latter he is not, because according to (23) this unity, too, is only *affirmed* by the idea of God, hence is *not the idea of God itself*. Yet even though God is none of these forms in particular, He nevertheless comprehends all of them, or He is the indivisible position of all of them by virtue of His Idea, just as the infinite space is properly *none of its dimensions*, neither length, width, nor depth discretely, but nonetheless comprehends them all within itself. These forms, then, are the *immediate* consequences of the idea of God—and from them there must once again follow an infinity. Only *God Himself* can follow immediately from the idea of God, according to the law $A = A$. Thus from the idea of God, God follows as His own affirmed [and] as affirming Himself in an indivisible unity. However, God once again also comprehends and encompasses Himself as affirmed and affirming, and the idea of the infinite affirmation hovers eternally over each particular form or kind of this affirmation. (Here, then, we have attained the first consequence from the Idea of God, though we must still study it in greater detail for the sake of our presentation and to recognize the abundance of the totality, or infinite affirmation.)

(44) *God posits Himself as Reality and, as something affirmed, He is thus infinitely affirmative.* This proposition was already implied in (23), [and] the following remarks are meant to prove it. By virtue of His idea, God can never be merely something confirming or confirmed [*Bejahendes oder Bejahtes*];

hence, because He is *not affirmed* except to the extent that He affirms Himself, He is, *as the affirmed*, simultaneously affirmative in an infinite manner.

Addendum. To the extent that, as the affirmed, He is infinitely affirming, God is *the real universe* or nature in the real sense. *Proof:* the form of being affirmed is the form of real existence, or the state of being affirmed and the Real are the same. However, as the affirmed, God is simultaneously [and] infinitely affirmative, i.e., creative; hence, as the affirmed or the Real, He = universe = nature, and He is the universe itself in a real appearance, or nature insofar as we understand it only as the universe.

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Note. Earlier on (42), we distinguished between *natura naturans*, or God as the absolute position and as the absolute creative force, and *natura naturata*, by which we understand the mere appearance of the absolute universe or the finite world. The *natura naturata* includes the so-called spiritual world no less than it includes what is usually called nature, namely, the external, real universe. In the present context, however, we speak of nature expressly in the sense of the *real*, objective universe; even as the real universe, nature can once again [be divided] into *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*; as we shall soon see, [it is] *naturans* to the extent that it is God, and to the extent that it is identical with the infinite affirmation; [it is] *naturata* with respect to its own particular life. We still abstract from this distinction, however, and claim that God Himself—to the extent that, as the affirmed, He is infinitely affirming—is the real universe or *nature* in an identical sense. Everyone will concede that they understand the concept of nature to mean nothing other than a Being, something real [and] hence affirmed, though not an inanimate Being, to be sure, but one whose nature is infinitely creative at the same time, an eternal birth of reality in the very manner in which creative nature still presents itself. In the present context, then, this altogether peculiar idea of something affirmed that is nevertheless infinitely affirming is now being traced back to the idea of God. Put more precisely, to the extent that, as something affirmed, God is infinitely affirming, He is the *in-itself* of the phenomenal and real nature or the *natura naturans* when understood as the Real itself.

(45) *God also affirms His own affirming power once again in an eternal manner, and hence He is infinitely affirmed as something affirming.* Th[is] proposition is self-evident. Namely, because God is the *infinite* position of Himself, He cannot even affirm Himself without once again affirming this affirmation itself, i.e., without being infinitely affirmed as something *affirming*.

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Addendum. To the extent that He is infinitely affirmed as something affirming, God is *the ideal universe*. For (according to the previous paragraph) the form of being affirmed constitutes a real and that of affirming an ideal form. However, because God, as the affirming, i.e., as ideal, is also infinitely

affirmed, He is also = the universe in an ideal sense, that is, *He is the ideal universe (natura naturans idealis)*.

Everybody will concede, for example, that *knowledge*—as such undoubtedly a phenomenon of the ideal world—is not *merely* ideal or mere though but that, as something ideal, it is simultaneously real,, i.e., simultaneously affirming and affirmed. Likewise, all activity, to the extent that it can also be subsumed under the ideal world, constitutes an affirmation that, as *such*, is simultaneously also affirmed or *real*.

(46) *To each mode of being affirmed within the real universe there corresponds an equal mode of the affirming in the ideal universe.* For the real universe is posited by virtue of God affirming Himself in an infinite manner, whereas the ideal one is posited by virtue of the fact that this affirming of Himself is again affirmed. Each particular mode of being affirmed in the real sense is thus posited by means of God being affirmed by Himself in this manner. This same mode, however, is also posited in the ideal universe by virtue of the fact that God affirms once again that mode of his own affirming.

(47) *Hence the real and the ideal universe are but the same universe.* For that which in the real universe is being posited as real and, in this real form, as affirming, is being posited as ideal within the ideal universe and, in this ideal form, as affirmed. More concisely, both, the real and the ideal universe are only the same substance, namely, God, who as the affirmed, is infinitely affirming and, as something affirming, is infinitely affirmed; and that which is posited in the former is also posited in the latter, not only as regards substance or essence. but also with regard to the mode or manner of positioning [see 46). Neither the real nor the ideal universe and, likewise, neither the real nor the ideal form are being affirmed discretely by the idea of God, but only the absolute universe, which comprehends both of these, though not as discrete entities.

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Addendum. The same is the case with each particular form of being affirmed in either of thee; namely, both are merely the same mode.

Note. Hence, too, the real and the ideal universe are comprehended with all their modes in God as one identical universe, that is, as a consequence of the *One*, infinite, and eternal affirmation of the idea of God.

(48) *Each one, the real as well as the ideal universe, is again the indifference of that which affirms and what is being affirmed, of the subjective and the objective.* For in the real universe the affirmed is posited as something affirming, and in the ideal [universe], the affirming is posited as something affirmed. In each of these two there has thus been posited the strict equality of both. The same one that affirms is also that which is affirmed, and vice versa.

Addendum. Nowhere is the universe does there exist something *purely* real or *purely ideal*, and the *essence* of the real as well as of the ideal = indifference (quantitative difference according to 30).

(49) Both, the real universe and the ideal universe, each as such, are merely particular consequences of the infinite affirmation of God, and they can therefore become manifest only as finite entities. For as regards the idea of God, when considered in the absolute sense, neither the real nor the ideal universe is implied as such but only the *absolute universe* as an indivisible position. Each of the two thus constitutes only a *particular consequence* of the idea of God, a consequence that *has Being* only as the absolute universe and that *lacks Being* when considered as separate from the absolute universe. However, because what is merely a particular consequence can become manifest only as a particular kind or, following its proper life, as a finite type, i.e., because it can manifest itself only in finite particular entities, it is also impossible for the real or the ideal universe as such to appear except through particular entities.

6,206 **Addendum.** The same applies to what is again understood only as a *particular consequence* in the real or the ideal universe. For it is not the particular consequence, but the real *universe* as *universe* that is affirmed by the absolute universe, just as the latter, too, is affirmed not with regard to a *particular consequence* but only as [this] universe.

(Recapitulation. God and the universe present themselves as the two immediate consequences of the idea of God, and the universe proved such a consequence to the extent that, by being affirmed, it is infinitely affirming (the exponent of the identity is, in our case, being affirmed or real). This first consequence of the idea of God (which, to be sure, has reality only in Him) is the *real universe*. Yet God's affirming [power] is once again affirmed in an equally eternal sense and, to the extent that the universe is infinitely affirmed as that which affirms itself, it is the equally eternal consequence of the idea of God (the exponent of identity is here the *affirming* [act] in opposition to that which is being affirmed, that is, the ideal [act]). This other consequence, though coeternal with the first one, is = the *ideal universe*.

However, neither the real nor the ideal universe but only the absolute universe is immediately *affirmed* by the idea of God. The real and the ideal universe thus are not *in themselves* except insofar as they are in the absolute universe (only in a mediate sense). However, the real and the ideal universe, too, contain within themselves once again the dissolved, particular consequences of the infinite affirmation. For God affirms Himself in an infinite manner; hence He affirms Himself in the real and the ideal universe no less than He does so in the absolute one; and [He affirms Himself] in each mode of the real and the ideal universe no less than in the real and the ideal universe itself, namely, infinitely. According to (31), nothing is posited *discretely* by virtue of the infinite self-affirmation of God, [and] neither this nor that consequence is being affirmed as such, but only the universe in the infinitude of these consequences and as their indivisible position is

being affirmed. Consequently, neither the real nor the ideal universe as such, nor any particular consequence implied in one or the other, can appear in its particularity except in the form of a finite thing. For that which is not *in-itself* but merely is to the extent that it is in the universe can appear with regard to its particular life only in a *finite* manner, i.e., by means of concrete things. We shall now continue to trace this infinite affirmation in its ramifications.)³⁵

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(50) *The real and the ideal universe converge as an absolute identity in Reason* (i.e., they are in absolute identity in Reason). For the essence of Reason (6–8) itself is nothing but the absolute affirmation of the idea of God. However, (see 24), the absolute affirmation of the idea of God is the universe—not the real or the ideal one, but the universe as such or as the absolute identity of the real and the ideal. Consequently, Reason, too, is the absolute identity of the real and the ideal universe, or both of these are comprehended by Reason in the same manner in which they are comprehended in the universe as such, i.e., in their absolute identity.

(51) *Reason, as such, is no particular consequence of the infinite affirmation; rather, it is the absolute identity of all particular consequences that follow from God, as is the case with the absolute universe itself.* The preceding proposition renders this self-evident.

Addendum 1. Reason thus is the universe within the universe itself, or Reason is that in the universe wherein God *Himself* comes to know the totality and unity of all the consequences of His idea. (Hence, if we determine God as the *archetype*, then Reason is that which equals the archetype, the properly archetypal in its reflected image [*Gegenbild*]). If the absolute identity were not present, as identity, in the ektypal world, no knowledge of the archetype and of the true universe would be possible. Reason is, so to speak, God's countenance spread out over the entire universe; it is the *reflection* of the divinity to the extent that the latter lies in the ektypal world, and yet it resembles, and is equal to, the essence of the divine because it exists in the ektypal universe not as a particular consequence but as the absolute identity of all particular consequences that follow from God.

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Note. By *reason*, incidentally, I do not merely understand its manifestation and its gradual progress toward self-knowledge in humanity, but Reason insofar as it is the universal, true essence, [and] the substance of all things and inhabits the entire universe. Because nothing possesses reality except for totality as such, and because nothing possesses reality except for Reason, it is not the particular form or dimension of a particular thing, e.g., of a thing of spatial extension, that is truly real, but the totality of all of these, i.e., the expression that Reason finds in it.

Addendum 2. Because the universe, when considered in an absolute sense, is the immediate consequence of the idea of God, and because the real and the ideal [are its consequence] only in a mediated sense, [mediated] by the universe, Reason, too, is the mediate consequence of the idea of God, and the real and ideal universe have Being only by virtue of being mediated by Reason.

(52) *Each one, the real universe and the ideal universe, dissolves in its absolute-ness into the other one and thus into an absolute identity.* For it is the affirmed as something that is itself affirming in an infinite manner which grounds the real universe, i.e., the absolute oneness [*eins sey*] of the affirming and the affirmed. Conversely, it is the affirming as something that is itself affirmed in an infinite manner which grounds the ideal universe, i.e., in the absolute homology [*gleich sey*] of the affirming with the affirmed. If we refer to the former as A and the latter as B, then the real universe presupposes that $B = A$, and the ideal one that $A = B$. However, if B becomes entirely identical to A, then the formula $B = A$ dissolves into $A = A$. Likewise, if A becomes entirely identical to B, then we no longer posit $A = B$ but $A = A$; both thus dissolve into the absolute identity and, to that extent, collapse into one another.

Addendum 1. Both admit of differentiation as real and ideal only by virtue of the nonidentity of their factors, they are properly one and the same.

Addendum. The point of their mutual dissolution into one another is the point where both attain Being in the absolute.

(53) *Within the real universe and, likewise, within the ideal universe, each considered as such, we cannot exhibit the absolute identity but merely the indifference of both factors ($A = B$).* The absolute identity [cannot be exhibited] for otherwise they mutually dissolve into one another (49), in which case the real universe is no longer *real*. However, to demonstrate that only their *indifference* can be exhibited, we must first distinguish between an absolute identity and indifference. Absolute identity is a self-sameness of *essence*, or it is the essential, qualitative unity. Indifference is merely a quantitative unity or a quantitative equilibrium. For example, the infinite space is the absolute identity of the three dimensions, of length, width, and depth, though not their indifference. By contrast, the cube or the sphere also exhibits a homology [*Gleichheit*] of the three dimensions, though not as absolute as identity but only in an equilibrium or as indifference. This much said, the *demonstration* (that in the real and the ideal universe, each considered as such, only the indifference of the two factors is being exhibited) runs as follows: according to our addition to (48), neither a purely real nor a purely ideal [factor] inheres in the universe; instead, the essence of the Real and the Ideal *as such* is always the indifference (48) of the Real and the Ideal—except only that it carries the determination either of being affirmed or of the Real, or that of

affirmation or of the Ideal. Let me reiterate the explanation (in 30) of a quantitative difference differently: there is only a quantitative difference between the Real and the Ideal. Consequently, only a quantitative homology, i.e., indifference, is possible in the real and in the ideal universe, each considered as such, and conversely, where the homology is no longer quantitative but qualitative, the Real as Real and the Ideal as Ideal would disappear and dissolve into the absolute identity.

(54) *The particularity of all finite things, by means of which the real and the ideal universes appear, each as such, can be grounded either in a reciprocal dominance of one factor over the other or in the equilibrium of the two.* For the idea of the real universe involves only the determination that the affirmed as such is simultaneously affirming. All possible difference here implies that the affirmed and the affirming be in a perfect equilibrium, i.e., in a state of indifference, or that the affirmed has dominance over the affirming, or vice versa. Because these are the only possible differences that can inhere in the real universe, the particularity of those finite things by means of which alone (see 49) the real universe can ever appear, can once again be grounded only in the indifference of the two factors or in a reciprocal dominance of one over the other. The same can be demonstrated in analogous form to apply to the ideal universe.

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(55) *The difference whereby the real and the ideal universe appear, each as such, can be expressed as the Powers [Potenzen] of the one factor; those differences comprehended by the real universe [can be expressed] as powers of the ideal factor and those of the ideal universe can be expressed as powers of the real factor, a proposition that merely refers to the method of our presentation and hence requires no further proof.³⁶*

Explanation. The expression of the real universe is $B = A$. Where the state of being affirmed has relative dominance over th[at of] affirmation, and where the latter affirms this very affirmation, we speak of A^1 ; where the affirmation dominates, and where it affirms the affirming factor of the first power itself, we have A^2 (A to the second power); where both of these, the affirmation of the affirmed (A^1), and that which affirms this affirmation (A^2), penetrate and reduplicate one another, we speak of A^3 or the point of indifference where the factors of A and B are reduced to a quantitative equilibrium. The same is the case with the differences of the ideal universe, except that here the powers are applied to B , because A is to become $= B$ rather than that B is to become $= A$.

(56) *The triplicity of the powers is the necessary mode of appearance of the real and ideal universe, each for itself.* For they can appear (see 49) only by means of finite things whose differences (according to 54 and 55) can be expressed only in three powers: the first of these designates the dominance of the state of being affirmed; the second one, that of affirmation; and the third one, the indifference of the former two.

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Note. The true *schema* of the immediate consequences from the idea of God would therefore be as follows: God as the archetype is the absolute identity that comprehends the real and the ideal universes. The immediate consequence of the real and ideal universes as such is the indifference of the affirming and the affirmed, a difference that finds its expression twice, once in the Real and once in the Ideal, (for the absolute identity is proper to neither one). From this indifference, then, there follow, in descending order, the affirmation or the Ideal in its relative dominance over the affirmed or the Real, and the affirmed or Real in its relative dominance over the affirmation or the Ideal; both of these follow in equal manner from the indifference within the Real and the Ideal. This very schema may be repeated into infinity. We need not demonstrate the authentic manifestations of this schema any further, however, because our task was merely to establish it as such, that is, to recognize the law according to which infinity follows from God in an infinite manner.

(57) *The powers are not determinations of the thing in itself or of its essence but, rather, of its nonessence.* For according to (54) and (56), the powers refer to the mere particularity of the *finite* thing by means of which the real and ideal universes appear, respectively. Yet whatever belongs to the finitude and particularity in the thing is not a determination of its Being but of its Nonbeing; that is, by virtue of this power a thing is not an essence but a nonessence.

(58) Hence *all differences, also in the natura naturata* (real or ideal) *are only of a quantitative kind, [that is] they are merely differences in power but not of essence.* This follows from the preceding paragraph. Meanwhile, it can also be demonstrated in the following manner. By virtue of the idea of God only one thing can be posited in the universe. All things are One with respect to their essence (10). The difference between the powers is made not with regard to the thing itself (i.e., the thing in-itself) but only relative to an otherness and to the whole. Considered in-itself, each particular is therefore the identity of the affirmation and the affirmed; yet the particularity or power in it can be determined only in a relative sense; it is not proper to the thing, considered in-itself, and hence it is not proper to the essence of the thing either. [The same is the case with] all difference.^b

(59) *The absolute is beyond all powers or [it is] strictly devoid of power [potenzlos].* This follows immediately from the preceding propositions, although it is of significant import (Eschenmayer's misconception).

^bTo illustrate the relativity of a particular in a given power, that is, the not being in-itself of a particular, I have elsewhere employed the example of a straight line in which two factors, A and B, are inseparably united while being posited as dominant, each one in the opposing direction.

(60) All powers are equal to one another as regards the absolute; that is, none follows from another, but all of them derive from the absolute identity both communally and in accordance with the same law. For this absolute identity is also absolute totality, In totality, meanwhile, forms are never successive, nor do they constitute a genetic sequence, but they are all posited in equal absoluteness according to the idea.³⁷

(61) The degree of reality held by each thing as such is in proportion to its approximation of the absolute identity (or is grounded in the degree of [such approximation]). By reality, I do not merely understand the relative one that is opposed to ideality, but the *absolute* one of substantiality, properly speaking, or reality in the sense in which the universe is this absolute reality. For the absolute identity is that which is strictly real or that outside of which nothing is real. In that same proportion with which a given particular approximates the absolute identity, it expresses in its particularity already a superior degree of reality, without therefore ceasing to be a finite being.

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Explanation. The most recent proposition does not contradict earlier ones, as might be argued because earlier we determined the particular as a pure Nonbeing whereas we now speak of degrees of reality among particulars. The former position, that of the Nonbeing of the particular relative to the universe, remains; precisely that which is posited as Nonbeing, however, can be posited with a greater or lesser degree of reality as such a Nonbeing.

By greater or lesser perfection of a thing I exclusively understand the more or less positive [quality] inherent in it, just as by imperfection I understand the division or subtraction of the implied privation. *The more a thing resembles the universe in its particularity, the more perfect it is;* likewise, the absolute intuits itself increasingly in this thing by positing the latter, with regard to the form of its particularity, relative to itself; hence the [particular], in its Nonbeing, is a progressively more perfect reflection of the universe; as it is being posited as a reflection of the universe, and as its particularity comes to resemble the latter more, less and less is being negated. Hence the thing becomes also less subordinated to finitude. Still one may ask on what that approximation of identity or the superiority of a thing's position is founded. Because the absolute identity comprehends all powers without itself being one of them, that thing among the particulars will most approximate the identity, hence will also contain the most positive [quality], which comprehends other powers. In this sense the higher power, comprehending the subordinate one, will necessarily also express a higher degree of reality or of position. For example, A^1 , which is merely an affirmation of the affirmed and which refers to the mere state of being affirmed, is necessarily a lesser position than A^2 , which also comprehends the very principle that affirms in A^2 . And yet, the superior degree of the position is in A^1 , because the latter once again affirms

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both A^1 and A^2 , and because it is not merely the affirmation of the affirmed, but it also comprehends the very affirmation of what has been affirmed as yet another affirmed, thereby resembling to a greater degree the plenitude of the infinite affirmation.

First Addition. Hence the degree of a thing's negation stands also in proportion to its distance from the absolute identity; or it is also subordinate to finitude proportionate to its distance from the absolute identity by its particular [position].

Second Addition. Conversely, the proportion in which the particular approximates that which is devoid of powers and becomes more akin to the universe is the same as that in which the nothing or the privation is being overcome or diminished within the universe.

With these propositions, the *general* philosophy now draws to a close. Thus far, then, we have laid the general foundation of the entire science of reason or of all true metaphysics, and our construction now enters the sphere of the particular; namely, that of the philosophy of nature.³⁸

Stuttgart Seminars (1810; based on posthumous manuscripts)

A Note on the Text

Following the death of his wife, Caroline, in the autumn of 1809, Schelling left his Munich apartment where he and his wife had spent most of their married life. Following an initial visit to Stuttgart, where he visited his son, Schelling decided to accept an invitation of his friend, Georgii, to present a series of lectures to a selected circle of listeners. Schelling's calendar (reprinted and annotated by Miklos Vetö's critical edition of the *Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen*, pp. 213–216) indicates that Schelling left for Stuttgart on January 17, 1810, and arrived there three days later. Another three days later, on January 23, a notation of his depression ("afternoon: dreary hours and many tears") is followed immediately by an entry about the commencement with the preparation of his lectures. The lectures, which took place at the house of Georgii, began with two Wednesday sessions in February but then were suspended until July for reasons unknown. During that month the lectures were brought to a conclusion in rapid succession. Like Eberhard Friedrich von Georgii (1759–1830), himself a senior employee in the Württemberg Department of Justice and eventually president of the Supreme Court at Würzburg, most of the other ten listeners were members of the political establishment in the capital of Württemberg. For a list of the people in attendance at the lectures, see Miklos Vetö's critical edition, pp. 240–241).

As with the *Treatise Explicatory of the Idealism in the Science of Knowledge*, the translation follows the text, and indexes in parallel pagination, of the *Sämmtliche Werke* rather than the superior critical edition, primarily because the latter still remains an enigma to readers and librarians alike. Naturally, M. Vetö's text has been taken into consideration. In his introduction, M. Vetö gives a good overview of the various, extant manuscript sources for the *Stuttgart Private Lectures*, which include a set of notes taken by Georgii, and at least partially reviewed by Schelling (see the correspondence between Schelling and Georgii on this subject in Vetö, pp. 215–236, 254 n.; and in Plitt, pp. 194–203, 218–223). Although two of these manuscripts were

destroyed with the Schelling *Nachlass* during a World War II bombing raid on Munich, Horst Fuhrmans was able to find another, almost complete, version (see his essay in *Kant-Studien* 47).

The lectures at Stuttgart provide the principal link between the 1809 *Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom* and the *Ages of the World*, which Schelling began late in 1810, after returning to Munich. As Schelling himself notes shortly before his death, “there is much imperfect [material] in it, for the decisive ideas I only arrived at in the years that followed” (in Fuhrmans, *Kant Studien* 51: 15). Being presented to a largely nonexpert, though well-educated audience, the *Stuttgart Private Lectures* constitute an excellent introduction to Schelling’s later philosophy, linking in exemplary ways his earlier analysis of the anthropological dimension of the human subject with the historical, metaphysical, and, at times, mystical concerns that were to preoccupy Schelling during the next fifteen years. See my “Critical Introduction.”

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I

To what extent is a system ever possible? I would answer that long before man decided to create a system, there already existed one, that of the cosmos [System der Welt]. Hence our proper task consists in discovering that system. The true system can never be *created* but only uncovered as one that is already *inherent* in itself; that is, in the divine understanding. Most philosophical systems are merely the creations of their authors—more or less well thought out—comparable to our historical novels (e.g., Leibnizianism). To proclaim such a system as the only possible system is to be extremely restrictive [and results in] a dogmatic system. I assure you that I do not intend to contribute to such [thinking].

At the same time, it is impossible to uncover the true system in its *empirical* totality, which would require the knowledge of all, even the most discrete links.

If the system that we wish to uncover shall indeed be the system of the cosmos, (1) it must intrinsically rest on a principle that supports itself, a principle that consists in an through itself and that is reproduced in each part of the whole;¹ (2) it must not exclude anything (e.g., nature), not must it unilaterally subordinate or suppress anything; (3) furthermore it requires a method of development and progression to ensure that no essential link has been omitted.

What is the principle of my system?

This principle has been expressed in a variety of ways:

(a) as the principle of absolute [and] unconditional identity, to be well distinguished from an absolute indifference [*Einerleiheit*]; the identity that we refer to here is an *organic* unity of all things. Every organism possesses unity without, however, enabling us to conceive of its parts as being one and the same. Thus, in the case of the human body all difference among organs and the functions dissolves into one indivisible life whose sensation as an indivisible and harmonious one equals the sensation of well-being; yet the parts and functions that constitute this organic whole are not, therefore, the same; the stomach, for example, obviously does not have the function of the brain, etc.

(b) This principle, then, found its more specific expression as the absolute identity of the *Real* and the *Ideal*. This is not to say that the Real and the Ideal are numerically or logically the same but, instead, designates an *essential* unity; it is the same aspect that is posited in both forms, though it is proper [*ein eignes*] in each of these forms and not one essence. If, for example, Jacob was also called Israel, he was always the same individual and thus was not being individualized differently by his different names. Such is not the case, however, with the identity of the Real and the Ideal. If we posit

$$\frac{A}{B = C},$$

then *B* and *C* are identical because they are in essence *A*, whereas they differ from one another as forms, i.e., each considered in an of themselves; *B* can never become *C*, and *C* can never become *B*, [and] likewise *A* inheres also in *B* and in *C* equally as a unique essence. Precisely because it is the same essence that inheres in each one, there exists among them an *essential* (i.e., not merely formal, logical, or nominal) unity, which is simultaneously accompanied by an authentic opposition or dualism, because none of these can be sublated into the other. For by virtue of the fact that *A* individualizes itself in both *B* and *C*, the latter two are equally entitled to existence.

Yet why has the first principle been determined as that of the identity of the Real and the Ideal? The determination was designated to indicate, first of all, that neither the Real nor the Ideal as such could ever be the absolute, but that both of these are only subordinate forms of the proper *primordial Being*. Furthermore, this [formula] is to express positively that *the same essence inheres* in both of these. My principle might be most easily explained by recalling Fichte's philosophy. Fichte reaches the conclusion [that there is] no existence other than what is *for-itself*.² Only the self [is] for itself; what follows from this is self-evident. Yet I disagree with his premise because subject and object constitute the universal form in matter as well as in the self (and only later can we point up the differences that separate the two): thus the force that repels a body is the objective, whereas what attracts the body is a force that returns to this body, hence a subjective force. Fichte does not know of this dualism that inheres in identity.

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(c) Alternatively, I expressed the principle of my philosophy in straightforward manner as the *absolute* or *God*. However, here the absolute is the principle of all of philosophy; philosophy is strictly a whole, living and creative in God, whereas the dogmatic systems of Leibniz, Wolff, and even Kant only add God after the fact. The difference between my philosophy and philosophy in general, as well as theology, to which it bears an affinity, is that theology is more of an abstraction from philosophy; it takes God as a particular object, so to speak, whereas philosophy understands God simultaneously as the supreme reason for the explanation of all things, thereby opening up the idea of God also for all other objects. The following [remarks] are related to these considerations.

We are often asked how, if philosophy conceives of God as its ground, we can arrive at a knowledge of God or of the absolute. There is no answer to this question. The existence of what is unconditional cannot be proven like the existence of something finite. The unconditional is the element wherein any demonstration becomes possible.³ Where the geometrician, when setting about the demonstration of a given concept, does not begin by proving the existence of space but rather presupposes it, philosophy, too, does not demonstrate the existence of God but confesses that it could not even exist without the absolute or God. Everything can be presented only in the absolute; hence the unconditional does not precede the practice of philosophy, but philosophy in its entirety is occupied with the existence of the former, [and] all of philosophy is properly speaking the progressive demonstration of the absolute, which therefore cannot be demanded from the outset of philosophy. Hence, if the universe cannot be anything but the manifestation of the absolute, and if philosophy is nothing but the spiritual presentation of the universe, philosophy, in general is itself but the manifestation, i.e., the ongoing proof of God.

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Let us now proceed to the following proposition: the primordial essence is necessarily and by its very nature the absolute identity of the Real and the Ideal. Not much is said with this proposition, however, except that it offers us the concept of the primordial Being, though not [this Being] as an *actual*, authentic one. Hence, if we say that the essence of man is an absolute identity of freedom and necessity, and that a free principle and a necessary principle are always already united in man, we thereby attain a concept of man, to be sure, yet we do not yet have the living, authentic human being; for to obtain the latter (i.e., an authentic human being) it is requisite that we consider man insofar as these principles are indeed in opposition and contest within him. Put differently, the primordial Being as the absolute identity of the Real and the Ideal is itself posited only in a subjective manner, whereas we also need to comprehend it objectively: the absolute identity of the Real and the Ideal must not only be *in and of itself* but also *outside itself*, [that is,] it must be actualized—it must also disclose itself in existence as that which, in its essence, is the absolute identity of the Real and the Ideal. However, everything can become manifest only through its opposite, i.e., identity through nonidentity, difference, and distinguishable principles. *How* this might apply to God we shall leave open for the time being, and we merely wish to point out *that* a separation, a difference must be posited if we ever wish to make the transition from essence to existence.

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This transition from identity to difference has often been understood as a *cancellation of identity*; yet that is not at all the case, as I intend to demonstrate without delay. Much rather it is a doubling [*Doublirung*] of the essence, and thus an intensification of the unity, something that is once again aptly illustrated by means of an analogy with ourselves. Consciousness arises only with the separation of principles that existed implicitly in man beforehand, such as the rational and the irrational. Neither of the two is meant to be erased. It is precisely in this discord between the two, and in its eventual resolution, that our humanity must prove itself. If, then, we become conscious of ourselves—when light and darkness begin to separate within ourselves—we do not properly transcend *ourselves*, [for] the two principles remain within us as their unity. Nor are we deprived in any way of our essence but, instead, we attain ourselves in a twofold form, namely in unity and in separation. The same [hold true] for God.

If we posit $A = A$ as the state of a self-rational Being, we must already take note of three aspects of this formula: (a) A as object, (b) A as subject, (c) the identity of the former two; yet all of this is [understood] as indistinguishable in a real sense. Meanwhile the difference of these principles is to be posited; that is, with A as subject and A as object being distinguishable, $A = A$ is converted into $A = B$; yet because there nevertheless prevails the unity of essence the expression of difference is not

$$\frac{A}{A = A} \quad \text{but rather} \quad \frac{A}{A = B},$$

that is, one and two; $A = B$ is the bifurcation [*Entzweiung*], whereas A [designates] the unity, and the whole expression designates the living, actual, and primordial Being. A possesses an object, a mirror in $A = B$. Hence the primordial essence is in and of itself always unity; namely, the *unity of the opposition and of the bifurcation* [*Entzweiung*].

Only now can we ask, how is this division [*Scheidung*] possible in God? Because the bond of principles in God is indissoluble, a division seems altogether *impossible*, and yet it is indispensable for any revelation.⁴ How, then, are we to resolve this contradiction?

If the primordial Being in A and B is once again the whole, A and B can exist separately without, thereby, cancelling the bond of principles. Thus we would have to assume that the primordial essence would remain whole in each of the separated entities and that it would be posited as the whole in them; thus B would be composed of B (i.e., the Real), of A (i.e., the spiritual), and of their unity. The same would also apply to A . And yet, would such a conception not already posit a *factual* [*reelle*] distinctness? Far from it. The formula

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$$\frac{A}{A = A}$$

asks us to understand the upper A as the essence itself. However, because precisely this identity also constitutes the copula in $A = A$ (the form), we may call this identity, to the extent that it inheres in a form, the essence within form. Hence we have (1) an essence in itself and (2) an essence in form. Still, as long as this form is $A = A$ (and the principles have not been differentiated), the essence in form is identical with, and not distinguishable from, the essence in itself. Now such capacity for differentiation is to be posited by way of conceiving of form in two subordinate and differential forms as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{A}{A = A} &= \text{essence in itself.} \\ \frac{A}{A = A} &= \text{essence in absolute form.} \end{aligned}$$

$$\left(\frac{A}{A = B} \right)^A \qquad \left(\frac{A}{A = A} \right)^B$$

However, because each of these forms comprises once again the same bond also found in absolute form, each of them is once again dissolved into the *essence of the absolute form* and thus into *essence in itself*.

This brings us back full circle, except that *now, instead of the mere factors of $A = B$, we have the two unities*, i.e., we have only a more highly developed unity, though not any *difference*.

Nevertheless, this conversion of absolute form into two subordinate forms or, which is the same, this complete transfiguration of the *whole* primordial Being into the Real and Ideal opens the requisite path toward the finite and real differentiation [*Differenzierung*].

Closer inspection reveals that between the two unities there subsists an actual difference, even though it is not *posited as actual*. The Real unity (the one under the exponent of B) presents itself as Being whereas the Ideal unity (that under the exponent of A) presents itself as the *position of Being*. Being, however, is also inherently positional: hence the position of Being [in A] is the *position of a position*, i.e., a *position of the second power*.⁵

It is here that we arrive at the concept of the *powers* so crucial for our entire investigation. Initially, we have something superior and something inferior, that is, an *axiological* difference. The Ideal ranks higher than the Real in respect to its dignity. We could present the matter in the following formula:

(a) Being cannot exist for itself. By virtue of the indissoluble bond, neither B nor A can exist for itself. The *Real* Being is therefore only A in B or under the exponent of B; this we can also express as $A = B = \text{first power}$.

(b) A cannot exist independently either but, as a position of the first power, it must contain the latter within itself in an ideal sense; hence, $A^2 = \text{second power}$.

Both unities or powers are once again comprised by the absolute unity, the latter, understood as the common position of the first and the second power, thus being A^3 ; and the thoroughly developed expression of the initial [proposition] $A = A$ thus reads:

$$\frac{A^3}{A^2 = (A = B)}$$

Yet this formula provides us with more than a merely axiological difference. The first power must by its very nature precede the second one; that is, between the two powers there exists a priority and a posteriority; the Real is by its very nature the first [*natura prius*], and the Ideal is the latter. The inferior [power, i.e., B] thus is indeed posited *before* the superior one, though not in an axiological sense, which would be contradictory, but as regards its *existence*.

Meanwhile the priority that we have established for the first power amounts to only an ideal or logical priority of the Real over the Ideal, not though to an actual one. We have demonstrated merely that a differentiation is *possible* and how. Yet how are we to arrive at the actuality of such a differentiation?

The ground for this actuality can indeed be found only in the primordial Being or God, for which we have already established the medium. Namely, as we have just seen, it is also in God that the first power takes logical precedence over the second one, the former being by its very nature the first, and the latter coming second. Hence, if the primordial Being wants to effect a bifurcation of powers, it must posit this priority of the first power as an actual one (i.e., must convert the merely ideal or logical priority into an actual one); that is, it must restrict itself spontaneously *to the first [power]*, and it must cancel the simultaneity of the principles as it originally inheres in the primordial Being itself.⁶ To thus cancel the simultaneity, however, neither affects the inner (essential) unity—for such [unity] does not depend on simultaneity—nor does it cancel the bond between the powers; for once the first power has been posited, we must immediately also posit the second and the third ones. When the priority of the first power becomes an actuality, the identity of the powers in the absolute is not being canceled, [but] it is merely transmuted into a linkage or coherence of the latter ones. Prior to this step, the powers inhere in the absolute in complete indifference and indistinguishability. Likewise, time in general, be it as unity or as eternity, exists implicitly in the absolute. By virtue of restricting Himself to the first power—by being spontaneously only *One*, although capable of being *All*—God effects a beginning of time (*nota bene*: not in time). By way of His retreat into to the first power we initially come to conceive of a limitation in Him; yet because such a [notion] contradicts His essence, which is by its very nature *all powers*, there eventually occurs a progress from the first power to the second and thereby a certain form of time. Thus the powers are simultaneously posited as periods [*Perioden*] in the self-explication of God.⁷

Related General Remarks

(1) A passive limitation is indeed a mere insufficiency or a relative lack of power; however, to limit oneself, to concentrate oneself in one point, yet also to hold on to the latter with all one's might and not to let go until it has been expanded into a world, such constitutes the greatest power and perfection. As Goethe says:

Whoever will greatness must concentrate himself;
Only in self-restriction is the artist revealed.⁸

The capacity to concentrate one's own power is the key to originality properly speaking and the root of [our] strength. In $A = B$, B itself is the contracting moment, and when God restricts Himself to the first power, this especially ought to be called a concentration [*Contraktion*].⁹ Concentration, then, marks the beginning of all reality. For this reason, it is the concentrating

rather than the expanding nature that possesses a primordial and grounding force. Thus the beginning of creation amounts indeed to a *descent* [*Herablassung*] of God; He properly descends into the Real, contracts Himself entirely into the Real. Yet such an act does not imply anything unworthy of God but, in fact, it is this descent that marks the greatest act for God and, indeed, for Christianity as well. By contrast, a metaphorically elevated [*hinaufgeschraubter*] God will benefit neither our minds nor our hearts.

(2) This act of restriction [*Einschränkung*] or descent on the part of God is spontaneous [*freiwillig*]. Hence the explanation of the world has no other ground than the freedom of God. Only God Himself can break with the absolute identity of His essence and thereby can create the space for a revelation. To be sure, all genuine, that is, absolute, freedom is an absolute necessity. For it is impossible to adduce any further ground for an act of absolute freedom; such an act is because it occurs in such a given manner, that is, it is unconditional and thus it is necessary. Ordinarily, freedom is recognized only where a choice has been made and where a state of indecision has prevailed, followed by a decision. Yet he who knows what he wants acts without any decision, whereas he who chooses does not know what he wants and consequently does not really have a will. All choice is the consequence of an unilluminated will. If God acts with good reason, His freedom is highly subordinate. That is, to have Him elect the best world from an infinite number of worlds is to grant Him the least degree of freedom. One such act, thoroughly absolute, is what founds our character. Character also originates in a form of concentration whereby we afford ourselves a form of determinacy; the more intensive this determinacy is, the more character we have. No one argues that man elects his character, which is to say that character is not the result of freedom in its ordinary sense; and yet it is imputable. Here, then, we have an instance of this identity of freedom and necessity.¹⁰

(3) God's self-restriction implies a beginning *of* time, though not a beginning *in* time. God himself is not, therefore, being placed in time.¹¹

Time is posited in the Real, yet the Real is not God himself although it is indissolubly connected with Him. For the Real in God is *Being* or existence, whereas the Ideal [in God] is the *existing*, that wherein the Real and Ideal are one, that is, the actually existing, living God.

Time is posited in the Real (in the Being of God). Yet the [Real], considered in its *wholeness*, does not exist in time, but only the discrete and limited entity within the Real [is capable of] progression and development. "Yet do we not posit such time *in* the Real *for* God, and would God not thereby be affected by time?" I answer: to the extent that *difference* is posited in the Real—and thereby time—God is once again the position of this difference = A^2 , which contains simultaneously and eternally all of what, according to the proposition $A = B$, develops strictly in a temporary manner. Because God—conceived of in an absolute manner, i.e., God insofar as He is neither

mere existence (the Real) nor merely the existing ([absolute] subject), but God as A^3 —contains $A = B$ in perpetual correlation, this $A = B$ once again dissolves in Him, seen as a subject (A^2), or in His consciousness into the eternity of His essence.

A^2 (God as subject) is the focal point or the unity of time.

God conceived of absolutely, A^3 , is neither eternity nor time but the absolute identity of the two. Everything that exists in time is eternal in God as a subject, and everything that is thus eternal in Him, as a subject, is temporal in Him as an object.

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Question 1. Is this act of self-differentiation temporal? Does it take place against the background of an infinite or a determinate time? Answer: Neither of these is true. It bears no relation to time, is *above* time, and is by definition eternal.

Question 2. Does the Universe have a beginning or not? It does have a beginning (because it is dependent [on God]), but it does not have a beginning *in time*; all time inheres *in* the universe, and no time is outside of it.

Properly speaking, *every* entity (not only the universe) contains time within itself. There is no *external*, universal time; all time is subjective, i.e., an inner time that inheres in each individual entity and does not exist outside the latter. Because each individual entity has other entities before and outside itself, we can compare its time with that of other entities, because it possesses only a properly subjective time. Thus we attain the abstract concept of time, namely, by comparing [and] measuring. Yet in and of itself there is no such thing as time. The Real in time consists only of manifold limitations through which an essence passes. Philosophically speaking, we can therefore say only that an entity has passed through this and that limitation but not that it has lived for this or that length of time. The latter determination of a certain length of time can arise only by way of comparison; however, if I examine an essence by way of comparison, I do not look at it *in and of itself*, that is, not in a properly philosophical manner. In the case of the universe any such possibility of deception vanishes, because everything is in it and nothing outside of it; hence the universe cannot be measured with the temporal parameter of an entity before or outside of it.

II

Undoubtedly you will have encountered some strange expressions, such as that of a concentration [*Contraction*] in God and other, no less peculiar ones. Permit me, therefore, to clarify the import of my ideas by offering the following, explanatory remarks:

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If we are to form an idea of the primordial Being, its mode of existence and life, we have only the choice between two conceptions.

(a) Either we conceive of the primordial Being as something complete and immutably present, which is the ordinary concept of God [maintained] by the so-called rational religion and by abstract systems, generally speaking. The more we elaborate this concept of God, however, the less life God appears to have for us, and the less it is possible to conceive of Him as an actual, personal, and properly living being, in the sense in which we consider ourselves living beings. If we postulate a God whom we are to imagine as a living, personal being, we are forced to consider Him altogether human; we must assume that His life bears the strictest analogy to that of the human being, and that alongside the eternal Being there prevails in him an eternal becoming; in short, [we must assume] that He has everything in common with man except for man's dependency (pronouncement of Hippocrates).¹²

This much said, I now wish to convey to you in colloquial and discursive diction what I had previously set forth in a more technical idiom.

God is an actual Being, though one free of anything before or outside itself. Whatever He is, He is by virtue of Himself; His Being starts out from itself in order to eventually find its end solely in itself. In short, *God creates Himself* and, just as He creates Himself, He is certainly not immediately present and complete either; for why otherwise create Himself? What, then, is this primordial state in which this primordial Being exists, one that exists entirely in itself and has nothing outside itself?

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All living existence proceeds from a preconscious state (*Bewusstlosigkeit*) in which everything still exists without separation, and which only subsequently develops in an individual manner; there does not as yet exist any consciousness of division and distinction (*Scheidung und Unterscheidung*). Divine life originates in an analogous manner. It contains everything in itself, and it is the infinite plenitude not only of homogeneous but also of dissimilar [elements], though in utter indifference. God exists only as a silent mediation about Himself, devoid of any expression and revelation. This is what we referred to as the equivalence of the powers in Him. There already exists the absolute identity of the subjective and the objective, of the Real and the Ideal, though it does not exist *for itself*; such it would be only *for* a third, observing party that, however, does not exist. Already, then, we can note that the entire process of the creation of the world—which still lives on in the life process of nature and history—is in effect nothing but the process of the complete coming-to-consciousness, of the complete personalization of God.¹³ This unusual proposition I intend to substantiate in what follows.

Within us there are two principles, an unconscious, dark one and a conscious one. Regardless of whether we seek to cultivate ourselves with regard to cognition and science, in a moral sense, the process of self-creation [*Selbstbildung*] always involves our raising to consciousness what exists in us in

unconscious form, to turn our innate darkness into light, in short, to attain a state of clarity. The same [holds true] for God. Darkness precedes him, and clarity only breaks through the night of His essence.

God contains the same two principles that we contain in ourselves. Once we notice these two principles in ourselves, that is, when an internal division occurs within us whereby we oppose our own selves, and when the better part in us elates us above our inferior part, at that moment consciousness *begins*, though not yet in its completeness. Life in its entirety is properly speaking always only an intensified coming to consciousness; most of us stand at the lowest level, and even those who strive rarely attain clarity; perhaps nobody ever attains it in this life. There always remains a residual obscurity (nobody ever reaches both, the highest good and the most debased evil).

Such is also the case with God. The *beginning* of consciousness in Him involves His separating Himself from Himself, His opposing Himself to Himself. For He, too, contains a superior aspect and an inferior aspect—which is what we referred to with the concept of the powers. In the as yet unconscious state, God contains the two aspects within Himself, to be sure, though He does not posit Himself as one or the other; that is, He does not recognize Himself in one or the other. It is only with the emergence of consciousness that such a recognition occurs. God posits Himself (in part) as the first power, as something unconscious; however, He cannot concentrate His self into the Real without expanding as the Ideal, that is, [He] cannot posit Himself as the Real, as an *object*, without positing Himself *simultaneously* as a *subject* (that is, without freeing the Ideal); and both of these [moments] constitute *one* Act of absolute simultaneity; with His actual concentration into the Real, God also posits His expansion as the Ideal.

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What is superior in God expels, so to speak, the inferior [dimension] to which it previously related with indifference or in a mixed state; conversely, what is inferior is separated from the superior by means of its concentration, which also constitutes the *beginning* of consciousness and of personality both in man and in God.

Yet just as the progressive self-formation and development of self-consciousness involves man's exclusion of the dark and unconscious [dimension] within himself, which he [now] opposes to himself—though not for the purpose of leaving it in this exclusion and darkness, but to progressively elevate this excluded and dark [dimension] to clarity and to transfigure (*hinaufzubilden*) it *in the direction* of his own consciousness—so God, too, excludes the inferior [dimension] of his essence from the superior one and expels it as it were from Himself; yet [He does so] not for the purpose of leaving it in this state of Nonbeing but to raise what He excluded from Himself as nondivine—that which *He Himself* is not and which therefore He separated from Himself—to educate, transfigure, and create from it what [eventually] will be similar and cognate to Him. All creation, then, involves a soliciting of the superior and properly divine [dimension] within what had been excluded.

To be sure, this unconscious [dimension] of God is no less infinite than He is Himself, and it is not soon exhausted, a [fact that] accounts for the extensive, processual nature of the creation of the world.

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To offer you one further perspective, this subordinate, dark, and unconscious dimension that God, as essence, continually *seeks* to expel and exclude from His proper self is *matter* (although not yet formed matter); thus matter is nothing but the unconscious aspect of God. Yet in seeking to exclude it from Himself, on the one hand, He also strives to integrate it with Himself, on the other hand; He seeks to raise it to form, to transfigure it—although subordinate—into His superior essence and to evoke consciousness *from* this unconscious matter. Hence the process of creation can rest only once consciousness has been awakened and created from the unconscious and from the depth of matter, namely, in man; and even though this higher stage still sees mankind retain an immense mass of unconscious matter, which, too, will eventually be dissected and provide the substratum for new creations, God nevertheless attains a point of rest with [the creation] of man; His principal objective is reached in man.

However, for the ordinary, abstract mode of perception it seems remarkable that God should contain a principle that is not God Himself but, instead, is unconscious and lesser than He. To conceive God as an empty identity, however, is to not comprehend the preceding at all. The necessity of this hypothesis can be proven by means of the *fundamental law of opposition*. Without opposition [there is] no life. Indeed, such [opposition] inheres in man and in all existence. In us, too, there is something rational and something irrational. Everything, if it is to become manifest, requires something that *it itself* is not *sensu stricto*.¹⁴ (Properly speaking, the [preceding] conception is directed only against abstract concepts of God as *ens realissimus—illimitatissimus*; [yet] God, to be sure, is not demarcated against an externality but only *internally*, as certain as He is a determinate Being.)

The following remarks shall help us understand better this simultaneity of a superior and an inferior dimension in God.

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The Real or unconscious is the *Being* of God conceived of purely as such. God's Being, however, is not the *same* as God Himself but, as in man, it differs greatly. Accordingly, the Ideal is the being [*der seyende Gott*] or existing God *sensu eminenti*. For by God, strictly speaking, we always understand the being God. Consequently, the two principles in God relate to one another like being and Being [*Seyendes und Seyn*]. The Ideal, or the *conscious*, constitutes the subject of Being, whereas the unconscious is strictly the predicate of this subject or of Being and consequently [exists] only relative to the latter.

Hence, once God has separated Himself internally, He has separated Himself *qua being* from His *Being*, which is also the highest moral act of man. Our Being is only a means, a tool for ourselves. Whoever is unable to separate

himself from his Being (i.e., whoever cannot become independent and free from it) but remains altogether entangled in, and one with, His Being is completely trapped by His selfhood and unable to improve himself, be it morally or intellectually. Whoever does not separate himself from his Being considers this *Being* essential rather than his inner, superior, and more truthful essence. Likewise, if God were to remain as immersed in his Being, there would be no life, no growth. Hence He separates Himself from His being precisely because it is merely a tool for Him.¹⁵

A second expression for the relation between these two principles, one that follows from the first one, states that they relate to one another like being and *nonbeing*.

It is precisely the investigation of this nonbeing that constitutes the most difficult burden, the crux of all philosophy. We try forever to grasp it but are unable to hold on to it.¹⁶

As a result of the misconstrual of this concept, the notion of a creation *ex nihilo* could arise. All finite beings have been created out of nonbeing [*aus dem Nichtseyenden*] yet not out of *nothing*. The *ouk ón* is no more a *nothing* than the *mé phainòmena* of the New Testament; it is only the *nonsubjective*, the *Nonbeing*, yet precisely therefore it is *Being itself*. A nonbeing frequently impresses on us as a being, when seen from another perspective. What, for example, is disease? A state that is *adverse to nature*, consequently a state that could not *be* and nevertheless is, a state that has no real ground and yet possesses undeniably a monstrous reality. Evil is for the moral world what disease is for the physical world; on the one hand, it is the most definitive nonbeing while possessing a monstrous reality, on the other hand.

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All nonbeing is *only relative*, namely, in relation to a superior being, and yet it also possesses a being of its own; hence B and A can nowhere be separated.

Hence, if B = pure nonbeing, B cannot exist for itself; it contains once again also an A and thus it is (A = B); however this *whole* (A = B) once again relates to something superior as a nonbeing, as a mere foundation, as mere material, organ, or tool; meanwhile it also exists once again as a being in and of itself. [Let us] apply all this to that which we have called *Being* in God: in relation to the active Being of God [*das Seyende in Gott*], this [Being] is indeed a nonbeing in that it originally relates to Him merely as the foundation, as that which He Himself is not, or as that which exists merely as the basis for that which truly is. And yet it is also a being in and of itself.

To put it differently, as indeed I have expressed it elsewhere, there is nothing purely and strictly *objective* in God, for such would not be anything; rather, that which relates to the superior dimension in God as something objective is once again in and of itself something subjective and objective, not merely a B but A and B.

Let us examine it from yet another perspective:

7,438 Mere *Being* in God is not just an inanimate Being either, but it, too, is once again an intrinsically living one that comprises being and a Being. God Himself is *above* nature, [and] nature is his throne, subordinate to Him, yet everything in Him is so replete with life that this subordinate [nature] also breaks through into a life of its own that, considered in and of itself, is an entirely complete life although it is nonlife with respect to the divine life. Thus Phidias depicts the struggle between the Lapithes and the Centaurs at the sole of Jupiter's foot.¹⁷ Just as the artist infuses even the foot of the God with vigorous life—perhaps guided only by that marvelous instinct that is proper to all Greek works of art—even the most extreme and remote part of God still possesses full and vigorous life.

By means of the theory of the two principles inherent in God we avoid two errors common to many doctrines of God. As regards the idea of God, two forms of aberration seem to be preponderant. According to the dogmatic view, which is considered orthodox, God is conceived of as a particular, isolated, unique, and entirely self-centered essence, thereby separating Him from all creation. Contrastingly, the common pantheist view does not grant God any particular, unique, and self-centered existence; instead, it dissolves Him into a universal substance that is merely the vehicle of all things. Yet God is both of these; to begin with, He is the essence of all essence, yet as such He must also exist, that is, as such an essence He must possess a grasp or foundation. Hence God, in His supreme dignity, is the universal essence of all things, yet this universal essence does not float in the air but rather is grounded in, as it were supported by, God as an *individual essence*; *the individual in God thus is the basis or foundation of the universal*.

7,439 According to this perspective, then, there are two principles in God. The first principle or the first primordial force is that whereby He exists as a particular, unique, and individual essence. We may call this force the *selfhood* [or] the egoism in God. If only this force existed, God would be only as a unique, isolated, and particular essence, [and] there would not be any creation. There would be nothing but an eternal seclusion and contemplation of this self, and by virtue of being an eternal and infinite force, this proper force of God would be a consuming fire that no creature could endure. (An analogy exists in the spiritual character of extremely reclusive people; for it is for precisely those reasons that we call such people sinister and ascribe a dark spirit to them.) However, this principle is eternally opposed by another one, which is that of *love*, and it is by virtue of this latter one that God is properly the essence of all essences. Mere self-love could not *be*, could not subsist, for, due to its expansive and infinitely communicative nature, such love would dissolve if it were not imbued with a contractive force. God can consist of pure love alone no more than man. If there is love in God, there is also wrath, and it is this wrath or God's own proper force that lends support, ground, and permanence to love.

These designations of the two principles that we have just discovered are merely the human expressions for the abstract notions of the Ideal and the Real. Love is the Ideal and the egoism is the Real [dimension] in God.

Likewise, love is God Himself, the proper God, *the* God who exists by virtue of the second force. The divine egoism, by contrast, is that force which is not in and of itself but that *by virtue of which* alone love, that is, the true God, exists. These principles we can also conceive of as existing initially in a certain state of indifference in God; however, if they persist in this indifference neither God nor anything else can develop. The true reality of God consists precisely in the activity and reciprocity of these two principles.

The first step towards this end is once again the division whereby God separates the love that inheres in Him, that is, his true and proper self, from the improper [self]. This separation can only occur as an elevation of the principle of love over the other subordinate one. The subordination of divine egoism under the divine love marks the beginning of all creation. Egoism = the first power, while love = the second or higher power. According to the mere egoism, no creature would ever exist. As something subordinate, however, this egoism is conquered by love, and this overcoming of divine egoism by divine love is creation itself (nature = contained force). The divine egoism is the grounding essence of nature; I am not saying that it is nature itself, for the actual, living nature as we behold it is already the divine egoism that has been conquered and tempered by divine love. Yet it is the grounding essence of nature, the material from which everything is being created.

We shall now return to the previous concepts of a Being in God (which relates to God Himself as Nonbeing relates to beings).

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Being in God is = to the divine egoism; it is the force whereby God exists as a proper essence. Hence it is *God in His entirety*, though in the form of an ego. Such an ego thus constitutes only the power, or the exponent, under which the divine essence has been posited. If this exponent or power was not opposed by another one, the divine essence would consequently remain in eternal seclusion and concentration; likewise, the external nature and earth would remain cold, dark, and completely secluded and devoid of creativity if they were not opposed by the effect of the sun. However, because this power of egoism = B is opposed by another one, that of love = A, the *entire absolute* is now awakened in B itself where it had thus far dwelt in a state of involution (seclusion); that is, its own *opposite, which is hidden and not yet revealed*—and thus, along with this opposite, the divine itself—are being awakened in B. For what is this divine [essence]? Answer: it is the living bond of the Ideal and the Real (containing an opposition in itself). Hence, if an A and B are being awakened in B itself so that consequently A and B are found under B, e.g.,

$$\frac{B}{A = B},$$

then a bond (an identity) of the Real and the Ideal, that is, the divine itself has been awakened in *B*. Here, then, we have something divine that has developed out of the nondivine, out of Nonbeing (*B*):

$$\frac{B}{A = B} = \text{nature.}$$

Those of you who are familiar with phenomena from the world of physics can exemplify this animation of nature as a distribution of magnetic force.

God excludes *B* from Himself, that is, from *A*; however, He cannot exclude *B* without opposing to it an *A*, nor can he oppose this *A* without evoking *B*; therefore we [formulate]

$$\frac{B}{A = B}.$$

This *A*, which is in nature, does not *enter into it*, but it inheres in it from the outset, for God is in nature in His entirety, although in a seedlike form; nature is God in His involution, or the potential God, whereas the Ideal is the *actual* God.

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The progress of creation, then, mandates that this state of the involution be continually cancelled in *B* and that the divine, which is slumbering in [*B*] so to speak, be awakened and cultivated; hence nature is something divine, though in an inferior sense, something that has been awakened from death, so to speak, something divine that has been raised from Nonbeing to Being, and that therefore remains separated from the primordially divine that has not been called into Being from Nonbeing.

In short, this visible nature is nature only by virtue of its *form* while being divine in its essence. It is the divine essence as it presents itself in the nonbeing rather than in beings (*A*).

This, then, shall suffice as an explanation of the *relation of nature to God*. This system has been charged with deifying nature. I will have to tolerate such charges as long as it is not assumed that *B* was initially something strictly nondivine that was being deified after the fact. On the contrary, it is already in its very origin a divine principle, and it is nondivine only relatively speaking (in relation to *A*). Yet to the extent that it has been raised from this relative nondivinity to the divine, that is, to Being, it is God Himself (and not us) who defies nature.

Others charge that this system identifies God with nature. Here, however, we ought to discriminate more incisively. We cannot take *nature* to mean the mere B, that dark primordial force in which all existence is grounded, something indestructible [*das Unverzehrlche*] that proves indissoluble for any *menstruum*. Is this B properly God according to my system? Far from it; it is merely the God's Being [*das Seyn Gottes*] (as such distinct from [His] being [*vom Seyenden*], [for] by God we always understand the being God [*der seyende Gott*]). Yet are we to call this [B] divine? Certainly, for it is a divine, primordial power, if only in the most narrow sense (namely, that it belongs to the proper, divine subject, to its inner essence) it cannot be called *divine*. It is divine because it belongs to God, and because even in the initial separation it still remains in God, just as the same dark principle in us, although it is not our true essence but, instead, is supposed to be controlled by the latter, is also called *human*. By contrast, the A in B is indeed divine throughout, and it is so in a superior sense than the B, which can be called *divine* only in a wider sense of the word. Nevertheless, the A [contained] within B can also be sufficiently distinguished from the absolute A in that it is only an ideal moment [*ein Geistiges*] that has been awakened in B, that is, in *nonbeing*.¹⁸ However, if we understand nature neither as A nor as B but as the entire A = B, we must once again first distinguish between A = B as that which *has been united* from A and B, and A = B to the extent that this [expression] stands for the living bond between the two, that is, as regards the binding [element] itself. The former is nature as the product or primordial matter wherein spirit and body are still absolutely united; and nobody will object to my identifying it with God unless he is not even familiar with the system's principal elements. However, if we look at the bond between the two, this [bond] is not merely divine but it is God Himself; yet it is not God in an unconditional sense but rather the God who has been created in nonbeing and whose creator we find precisely in the unconditional or being God. The bond that inheres in A = B (if we take it for nature in its entirety) is thus indeed God, yet it is God as a product of Himself or God as the Son, of whom, because He is the essence of nature, the Scripture rightly claims that everything is made through Him and nothing without Him. These ideas of the Scripture were proscribed because they were not understood, as indeed for most people the mystery of Enlightenment consists precisely in the fact that they have turned the limitation of their intellectual faculties into a *virtue*. Indeed, I do not mean to prove anything with these expressions, and even less do I intend to turn my system into an orthodoxy. This bond, then, is called very expressively the *word*, (a) because in and through it alone all possibility of difference arises; (b) because in it there obtains for the first time an organic connection between autonomy [*Selbstsey*n] and dependency [*Nichtselbstsey*n], between vowel and consonant (A = vowel, B = consonant; the latter is the inherently mute being that is elevated to intelligibility only by means of the Ideal or A).

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I shall explain my system by means of the following outline of modern philosophy:¹⁹

Absolute Dualism of Descartes:

A	B
The spiritual, monolithic, i.e., which is not composed (a completely inadequate expression).	The material or physical; strictly inanimate, a mechanism.

Spinoza [maintains that] $A = B =$ the absolute identity of the two principles.

If we adhere strictly to the generalities of Spinoza's system, we should quite likely be tempted to regard his thinking as entirely identical with that of the more recent philosophy of identity, and vice versa. Let me, therefore, briefly reiterate the differences:

(a) Spinoza maintains the absolute identity of the two principles, to be sure, yet these principles bear no active relation to one another, they affect each other in no respect—they do not have any effect on one another—they merely *are*; there obtains between them neither a dynamic opposition nor a living interpenetration (i.e., we have a mere combination of the two Cartesian substances.)

(b) Spinoza's physics are completely mechanical, a fact that should already suffice to make anyone realize that there remains a fundamental difference between the axioms of the philosophy of nature and those of Spinoza's philosophy. (In general, [we find] a lack of any movement in the Spinozean system; [it is] inanimate.)

(c) To be sure, Spinoza claims that thinking and substance (= the Ideal and the Real) both belong to the same substance and function as its attributes; he altogether fails, however, to think with any precision this very substance of which they are considered attributes, determining it instead through the empty concept of an identity (empty because of the lack of opposition), which is tantamount to ignoring it rather than making it the principal object of his philosophy. *Precisely* at this point, which Spinoza does not investigate any further, precisely here the concept of the living God can be found, namely, God as the supreme personality. Hence it is altogether true [to say] that Spinoza at the very least ignores the personality of the supreme Being, if he does not positively deny it.

Of [the two,] A and B, *Leibniz* retains only the A; B, as the dark principle—that is, Being or existence—has altogether vanished and has been dissolved into the power of representation. To be sure, *Leibniz's* system retains an identity, though one that is entirely one-sided rather than twofold. In the meantime, *Leibniz* *does* retain an A and B under his A; that is, although he

denies the reality of the corporeal world in general and throughout, conceiving instead of everything as representing monads, he nevertheless concedes a reality to that which we call the corporeal world to the extent that it consists of powers of representation, e.g., a tree.

The opposite of intellectualism is the higher materialism or *Hylozoism* (which has always existed, to be sure, yet has been particularly forceful during the age of Leibniz).²⁰ Hylozoism knows only *B*, yet under this *B* it [conceives] once again an *A* and a *B*. Thus it would be easy to consider Hylozoism entirely identical with the philosophy of nature. However, the difference consists in the fact that Hylozoism postulates a *primordial* life in matter, whereas we do not. By contrast, we claim that matter contains life not *in actu* but only *in potentia*, not explicitly but implicitly: it contains everything under the aegis of Being and death. (As regards death, it is necessary to conceive of a death that contains life within itself.)²¹ Matter is *awakened* to explicit life and properly animated only by the Ideal or divine. We could say, then, that Hylozoism only begins where the general part of philosophy ends. ([We may remark] on the beneficial influence of Leibnizianism and Hylozoism on physics; see Bruno, Kepler, et al.)

Because the process of analysis, namely, that which descends to the inferior, is under way, we can descend even further. Thus, of both *A* and *B* as [existing] under *B*, the *A* was also being removed, that is, there existed only *B*—a lifeless substance devoid of all interiority; [such a *B*] was legitimately fragmented into atoms, into a dust of particles whose efficacy resides solely in their figure (something external and not a original quality); and this conception purported to explain not only nature but also the existence and the mechanism of the spirit—*Système de la nature*, that is, the most debased or French materialism. Its opposite can be found in the Idealism that was born in Germany by Kant and Fichte. Yet even there, Kant still allowed for a variety of interpretations. The Fichtean exegesis still excises the *B* from *A* and *B* as conceived under *A*; there is not even anything intellectual outside ourselves; indeed nothing exists outside ourselves, [and we have] only a subjective self, only the human race. This complete annihilation of nature results in the puzzling fact that Fichte continually assures us that there is no such thing as nature while presupposing time and again nature as existing (a teleological explanation; efficacy of [consciousness] on nature).

Now that the dissection [of nature] had been advanced to such an extreme point, there remained no alternative but to return to the original opposition from which all modern philosophy had set out and which alone had not been dissolved; namely, the opposition between identity and duality. This is what I have attempted. I have always made it clear that, for me, absolute identity is not a *mere* identity but the identity of unity and oppositionality.²²

(a) [There are] two different principles: A and B; and hence there is a dualism.

(b) However, the two principles are one in spite of their opposition.

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Regarding the proximity of my conception of nature to the presently dominant systems of physics and philosophy, it ought to be remarked that the former does not admit of an exclusively and purely objective nature, that is, a nature that would consist of mere beings or nonbeing. This relation, which is at no point merely subjective or objective, but which is always, albeit in different proportions, *both of these*, I have referred to as a strictly *quantitative* difference.²³ Indeed, between the two principles *as such*, between A and B, there is no *merely quantitative* difference but most decisively a qualitative one; however, in all *reality*, regardless of what kind, both the subjective and the objective or the Ideal and the Real exist conjointly, albeit in varying proportion. This could be illustrated by the (magnetic) schema in the *Journal for Speculative Physics* on which my subsequent remarks will be based.

Let this suffice regarding nature in general, and let us proceed to the particulars of nature, though I shall limit myself to the most essential.

The general expression for nature, as we have already seen, is

$$\frac{A}{A = B}$$

or, because we are already positing $A = B$ as the first power, that is, $as = B$, [we may say]; with respect to the universe, of which she is only a subordinate part, nature = the first power = $(A = B)$. This neither precludes nature from containing all the powers in herself nor from differentiating them within herself to the extent that a division is possible at all. Eventually, we can witness nature's dispersion into the most corporeal things, e.g., metals. These will be found on the side of the 'B' in our formula. Yet as each domain constitutes in and of itself a complete whole, the metals do so, too, gaining in corporeality on one side [B] while becoming increasingly spiritualized on the other side [A], to the point of dissolving into certain gases. Thus the entire realm of matter extends into two directions of which one is dominated by corporeality and the other by spirituality. This entire realm of the corporeal *in* nature, however, is once again opposed by a realm of the spiritual that includes phenomena such as light, warmth, electricity, and many others. Finally, then, there exists a realm where the spiritual and the bodily dimensions interpenetrate completely, namely, the realm of organic nature that is made up of plants and animals.

Yet, as we have said before, on the whole we have here only the first power $A = B$. And indeed, even if the A^2 is being elevated above nature, it originates only at the threshold of nature, in man. Hence, even though *all of* nature = the first power, it nevertheless unfolds once again in the three powers according to which we shall briefly examine it.

The first power is that of the dominant *being* or of the dominant corporeality; however, it [obtains] in such a way that at this supreme point of the development, the spiritual, the corporeal, and the unity of both are being posited. As is well known, corporeality rests on the presence of the *three dimensions*. These three dimensions are indeed nothing but the three powers within an individual [entity]: (1) the egoistic dimension whereby a thing is properly posited as an entity = length, extension or, which is the same, *coherence*. By virtue of the coherence each thing would extend into infinity if it were not limited by another dimension. Hence, (2) [there exists] an ideal dimension (limiting the egoistic one) = width. (3) Indifference = the third dimension.

Overall, this power is dominated by *B*, that is, *A* and *B* are again posited together under *B*. This *B*, *under* which *A* and *B* are again being posited together, which therefore is a B^2 , so to speak, is the force that coerces and binds everything, namely, *gravity*. Gravity in nature is the night, the dark principle, perennially fleeing light, while lending, in its very flight, support and continuity to the creations of light. (If there did not exist something opposed to the light and to thought, something that eludes any grasp, there would not be any creation whatsoever, and all would be dissolved into countless thoughts.)

Even in matter, to the extent that it stands exclusively under the power of Being, *Being* and *Activity* are nevertheless united (for we can also express the Ideal as an activity), yet Being and activity are both still intertwined with Being, and the " $A = B$," or the corporeality of the first power, still relate to the spiritual or to the Ideal in the same manner in which the initial *B* related to them. Namely, it is the indifference that the spiritual or the Ideal seeks to dissect, to polarize, and to differentiate.

It is only by means of this differentiation that qualitative difference emerges. Because this difference is virtually inexhaustible and because even its very first branches would mandate a separate scientific presentation, I shall limit myself to its most elementary aspects, namely, to the most ancient division of the four elements to which even modern chemistry has been returning with increasing frequency.

In $A = B$, *B* is the element of the earth, the properly grounding principle.

Hence, if " $A = B$ " as a whole is being polarized in the direction of *B*, it is here that we locate the realm of the earth's dominant principle, which has once again two poles (metals and earth).

The element opposing earth (*A*) is that of air, itself the spiritual or ideal element, so to speak. Yet in addition to the opposition between *A* and *B* we still have to examine another opposition. It is the one between the bond and that which is bound together. The former acts as the producer and the latter as the product, that is, again as the *active* and the *passive* principle, as the Ideal and the Real.²⁴

The producing element, then, is the bond if it exists in harmony with the product; indeed, it is nothing but the inner life and texture, the soft, temperate flame of life that burns in every being, even in that which seems lifeless (clairvoyant people behold it). However, when viewed in conflict with the product, it becomes the consuming fire.

The element of fire is hostile to the *proper nature* or *selfhood* of things. As long as the product relates to it as a nonbeing, that is, as the basis or something subordinate, the fire remains peaceful. However, if in opposition to the essence this product seeks to become being [*zum Seyenden*], there originates a furious fire.

That particular element sought by fire as commensurate with itself and as its point of rest, is water. Fire and water [are] thus supreme opposites; yet whatever is most intensely opposed is also most intensely united. Water is, as it were, *liquid* fire, fire *in concreto*, the flame that, properly speaking, only originates with the collaboration of water, in fact, only fiery, burning water. Note the close affinity of the two: (1) meteors covered by water, (2) the consuming force that lies in water. Furthermore [water] contains a combustible quality on the one hand and the *menstruum universale* on the other hand, namely, oxygen. Water, in its vivid form (in the sea) is everywhere united with fire.

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It was with good reason that the ancients postulated a fifth element, a *quinta essentia*. And this element is none other than primordial matter itself, which is completely spiritual and physical—the corporeal element (the body already = the identity of A and B). Fire does not exercise any control over this element in its purity. Rather this element bears strict identity to fire—not simply by means of negativity, such as is the case with water, [namely] by virtue of negating all its qualities, but rather by virtue of the highest positivity or perfection. This [element] is the corporeality that proves indestructible for fire, and its most proximate element is the still mysterious element known in modern chemistry as nitrogen, itself the foundation of the natural world of animal life. Nitrogen is highly resistant to combustion, however vehement the flame; such combustion becomes possible only by means of electricity or by mixing nitrogen with something inferior that causes it to deteriorate. For everything combustible contains something imperfect, defective and corrupted. Let us now pass on to the second power.

This activity, thus far only posited as implicit or as potential, is now being posited as explicit or actual, namely, as the *actual* life of matter, that is, as the dynamic process.

The first power, as we already noted, acts as a kind of *involution*, and the principle of this involution is gravity.

The [type of] gravity that is dominant in $A = B$ is opposed by an A^2 , which again relates to gravity in the same manner in which the absolute Being or the absolute A relates to the initial B, that is, to nature [in general].

Just as this A^2 kindles an opposition in nature and along with it kindles life, so the A^2 in nature incites the opposition in gravity and along with it incites life. This A^2 = ether [is] an immateriality in the material world. Such an opposition was already incited in the static qualities of matter. To be sure, gravity here does not merely assume a passive role; it actively resists evolution as a positive darkness. Only with this *actual* opposition does there arise authentic life in matter. This is the *dynamic* process. Again, I shall restrict myself to what is most essential. We distinguish between (1) the processes or forms of activity that [inhere] more in the corporeal or in the physical [realm], and (2) between the spiritual form of these very processes. The three fundamental processes of the first kind are (a) the magnetism = first dimension = selfhood or egoism; (b) electricity = polarity or opposition between the producer and the product, the active and the passive, that is, between two entities of which one is always passive and the other one always active (with respect to the earth, these two processes are also capable of determining the regions of the world.); (c) the totality of all these processes = chemistry or galvanism (properly speaking only organic chemistry in which we can still discern the collaboration of electricity). Finally [there comes] the process of combustion.

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Yet as regards the form of these processes, we find (a) resonance [Klang] to be the spiritual process that corresponds to the process of magnetism in the Real, whereas (b) luminosity is the ideal analogue to electricity (light being a spiritual matter), and (c) the process of warmth appears as the analogue of the chemical process as long as the producer remains in *identity* with the product (penetrating warmth). In the case of a decisive conflict between [producer] and product this analogue is fire. (Thus fire is indeed a fundamental substance—a Vesta—and hence is included among the elements).²⁵

In all these processes, then, the spiritual is being developed from the depth of matter, which is precisely the purpose of all creation. Everything is being called forth from the dark principle by the superior, creative principle that we have referred to as *ether*, yet that is indeed the true living spirit of nature. Inasmuch as we have demonstrated that the ideal aspect of this bond which lies *in* the product itself is that of light, light can be understood as the proper appearance of this living spirit. Hence light must be understood as the universally animating, evolving principle, and nothing could be objected if we were to oppose light and gravity rather than ether and gravity. I shall now attend to the third power.

Thus far gravity still maintained its substantiality in opposition to light (A^2). However, because gravity as a form is just as subordinate to the A^3 as is light, and because the initial B also already involves this A^3 , the supreme power of nature is necessarily that wherein *light* and *gravity* (or matter—for these are correlative) are being posited together under A^3 , that is, where they are jointly subordinate forms of the A^3 .

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That this takes place in the organic world follows from the fact that in the organism matter, which until now seemed to be substance, becomes subordinate to a superior force, namely, life itself, which is precisely this A^3 . From this it follows that in the organic world matter is not at all relevant with regard to its substance but, rather, that its *form* has become essential, in short, that matter itself has essentially become form.

What is this A^3 ? It is the innermost substance of B itself, which implicitly contains all the powers.

The *powers* of A express nothing other than the successive elevation [*Erhebung*] of the nonbeing or B into being or A .

Hence A^3 in nature expresses nothing other than the Supreme Being that has been elevated from nonbeing, that is, the innermost [essence] of nature.

If I had tried to formulate this conception more intricately, I might have chosen to designate B as a set of powers according to various stages through which it becomes being [*Seyendes*], that is, equal to A .—See below.

The basic formula for nature is $A = B$, or that wherein the B that initially dominates in nature—the initially dominant nonbeing—becomes *being* [*seyend*]. At the lowest level, beings are altogether dissolved into the corporeal. Here, then, nonbeing exercises its greatest power, and this first power of nature we could have expressed as $A^1 = B^3$. Where B is yet found in the highest power, A appears necessarily in the lowest power. This ($A^1 = B^3$) is the expression of gravity. In the dynamic process, where the previously mute substance already gives off signs of life, this substance itself is already diminished as B , that is, as Nonbeing, by one power. Hence it is $= B^2$, whereas being has been increased by one power, so that the whole formula reads $A^2 = B^2$. Here nonbeing and being are still in a state of equilibrium; hence the dynamic period of nature is that of a struggle, which does not yet result in any solid product (these powers are also successive in time: power = period).

In the *organic world*, nonbeing is relegated to the lowest power whereas being has been increased by yet another power, hence the B appears as B^1 and the A as A^3 .

In the *organic process*, the same forms that prevailed in the dynamic process now have been raised to a far superior level. Again, I shall mention only the essential. What is *most essential* is that A^2 and $A = B$ are identical. Now the light [*Licht*] of matter can have been bound up only with the *first* dimension, so that everything is at least subordinate to this dimension. This moment = reproduction (the egoistic, real dimension), growth = (coherence), shoots, and vegetation. If this espousal also applies to the *second* dimension (corresponding to electricity, though it has entered into substance = substantial electricity), then this will be = to the irritability wherein *again* all dimensions are being repeated: (a) circulation, (b) respiration, (c) spontaneous movement (the supreme mystery).

If light and matter also interpenetrate in the case of the *third* dimension—with the entire *Being* that had previously been the object of cognition now becoming the subject of cognition—this stage will = sensibility [*Sensibilität*].

At the second level, the external world opened up to the organic being, to be sure, yet it did so in a way that preserved a difference between the two. The third level of organic life is reached when the product contains the possibility of other things without differing from them, that is, if it has an intuition of these things in itself (sensibility, the intuitive faculty of animals); here *B*, which initially, in the inorganic matter, had still exercised the highest power, is consequently transformed from the object into the subject of cognition. In sensibility *B* has been related to the *A*³. Here, then, the division is as follows if we adhere to the fivefold division of the senses: (1) an ideal and a real pole—face and the sense of touch; (2) corresponding to the three basic processes (a) the sense for magnetism = the faculty of hearing, (b) the sense for electricity = the faculty of smell, (c) the sense for chemistry = the faculty of taste.

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Once *A*³ has entered by way of the senses, nature would seem properly complete. There still remain the prescient faculties of the spirit, however, the instinct and the artistic drive, of which we shall treat together with the transition from the organic world of nature as a product to the world of spirit. First let me make some remarks on the former of these.

Having been raised to the level of *A*³, *B* undergoes renewed internal division, that is, becomes differentiated, with the Real = the plant and the Ideal = animal life. The indifference of plant and animal (both as regards the outer *gestalt* and the inner formation) is the crowning instance of creation = man (formation [*Ausbildung*] of the dimensions). Yet once again, the same opposition reappears in the discreteness of gender (woman = plant, man = animal). The mystery of the division of the sexes is nothing other than the presentation of the primordial relation between the two principles of which each is real *for itself* and to that extent independent from the other, although it does not and cannot exist without the other. Both, this duality, which does not exclude identity, and this identity, which does not exclude duality, are reconciled by *love*. God Himself is reconciled to nature by virtue of a spontaneous love, that is, He is not dependent *on nature* and yet He does not want to exist without her. For love does not exist where two beings are in need of each other but where each could exist independently, such as in the case with God who is already *in and of Himself—suapte natura*—the being God [*der Seyende*]; here then, each one could be for itself without considering it an act of privation to be for itself, even though it will not want to, and morally cannot, exist for itself without the other. Of such a kind, then, is also God's *true* relation to nature, that is, not a *unilateral* relation. Nature, too, is drawn to God by love and therefore strives with infinite zeal to bear divine fruit.

7,454 Earth loves the heavens and it eternally longs for the latter just as woman longs for man. God loves what is inferior and lesser than He Himself, that is, nature, because only in her can He create what is similar to *Himself*, namely, the spiritual.

We still have not considered one other determination of nature; namely, each product of nature is an A and B, that is, the identity or the primordially Real itself as it is gradually forced to emerge from darkness into light and thus to reveal itself successively as gravity, coherence, sound, light, warmth, eventually as fire, and ultimately even as A^3 , as the proper *soul* of the organic world.

How, then, is it that this bond is not an eternal one as it ought to be expected? What accounts for the universal finitude of nature? Indeed, it was not possible to answer this question until now; for this answer is connected with the transition into the world of spirit.

Namely, (1) nature in its entirety is only the *support*, the foundation of the spiritual world, and thus it does not exist on behalf of itself, although it is a thoroughly living being; it is to relate to the spiritual world again only as a nonbeing. Hence, because nature exists only on behalf of this higher [world], that is, on behalf of A^2 , it also requires the support of the latter, which it can receive only *to the extent* that it is in conformity with A^2 and to the extent that it becomes the means of existence and manifestation as being.

However, nature or the nonbeing can be raised only gradually, step by step, to the point where it can be fully integrated with A^2 and thus can become the latter's immediate manifestation or body, so to speak.

Nature becomes capable of this [task] only if it contains what resembles A^2 , that is, if its initial B is transfigured to the point that it becomes itself A^2 (in the absolute sense).

7,455 Thus far, then, we have been guided to the point where the initial B in nature is related to the A^3 . Yet because this A^3 is still something objective relatively speaking—namely, with respect to the whole—it continues to relate to nature once again as a B that bears relation to a yet superior A, notwithstanding its being the absolute A. This yet superior A can no longer be found in nature, because there everything is complete once the third power has been reached. Hence it is found *above* and *outside* of nature. If we were to continue the sequence of the powers, we might designate it as A^4 , there being already an A^3 in nature; however, all this means is that, with respect to all of nature, it is A^2 . This absolute A^2 , then, to which the A^3 of nature, whose supreme activity we had located in the faculty of intuition, relates once again as a B, [this A^2] is outside of or *above* nature; still, it is effective *in* nature and is not separated from nature by virtue of the fact that, in its very opposition to nature, it is the universally solicitous power [*das allgemein Erregende*] in nature.

Its first relation to the A^3 of nature is once again analogous to that between the subjective and the objective, the active and the passive. Or, rather, its first relation to A^3 is one of opposition. It now becomes essential to determine the *appearances* of this opposition. These are none other than those of the animal instinct that any reflective mind must rank among the greatest phenomena—a genuine touchstone of all true philosophy.

Peculiarities of the instinct are (a) acts closely resembling those carried out with reason that nevertheless (b) are being carried out without any pre-meditation, reflection, and without any subjective reason and, because subjective reason = understanding, without any understanding. *Explanations*: Descartes [explains it] as a mechanism—animals as machines.²⁶ Leibniz explains them as obscure representations; to be sure, the instinct is something of that kind, but the explanation is far too general. More recently, the instinct has been referred to as an analogue to, or degree of, reason. The former is simply meaningless whereas the latter is positively nonsense. The explanation rests on the opposition between the A^3 , which here once again acts as B , i.e., as the force of gravity in its highest power, and A^4 or the absolute A^2 . A^3 is a substance in relation to A^4 wherein it seeks to raise A^2 for itself (just as it had previously raised in nature that which resembled it), even though in the case of animal life this is not yet possible; nevertheless, because A^3 is being activated by a strictly intellectual principle, it acts *as though* it contained such a principle within itself; in short, A^4 constitutes the intellect of the animals or, as the ancients already put it correctly: *Deus est anima brutorum*. The divine animates them, and thus they act or, rather, A^3 acts in them already in accordance with the principle of the spirit as though the animals themselves constituted a form of intellect (which indeed they already are, implicitly or potentially). The same does not hold true for the human. Man's soul is not the divine, but he himself in his soul.

Three stages of the instinct must be distinguished: (1) The self-preservation as individual and as species (love for the young ones); e.g., migrating birds. (2) The artistic drive that creates something extrinsic to itself (partially a supplement for the procreative drive); it is peculiar to note the two arts of architecture and music are especially represented in the instinct, because they are otherwise related as well, with architecture among the plastic arts corresponding to music (see Vitruvius).²⁷ (3) Divination: this refers to character, a tranquil and self-contained existence that is altogether indisputable. The uniformity of character is supposed to cease in the world of the human.

It is only in man that the absolute A^2 , so long searched and longed for, is finally raised from B ; that is, the Being in-itself or the being *sua natura* is raised from the nonbeing.

Whatever is spirit *sua natura* and, as such, has been raised from nonbeing, that is, the becoming—though it is being [*Seyendes*] *natura sua*, is

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the *finite spirit*. (This would appear to be the supreme contradiction, but nature is full of such contradictions). The spirit is (a) an intrinsically human form of being, though (b) it originates only in nonbeing and hence is a created and finite spirit marked by an eternal difference to God.

Only one more question requires our attention: why is it that the absolutely Ideal or the absolute A^2 has been posited as actual only in man while being posited everywhere else only as potential? I shall comment on this issue only briefly:

A^2 , which has been raised from within nature, relates to that very nature whence it originated, once again as the subjective relates to the objective or as the subject of knowledge to that which is known. Yet the absolutely subjective exists only where [we find] also the absolutely objective, i.e., the objective in its perfection and *totality*. This is the case only in man, according to the saying that the human body constitutes the world on a small scale, that is, as a microcosm. There exists only one kind of species of which this could be said, namely, those great entities that, because they are simultaneously bodies and worlds, are called planets.

III

Only that whose nature constitutes its very *being* is also by definition *free*. All dependency derives only from Being. Yet that which is being [*das Seyende*], both in and of itself and by virtue of its own nature, simply cannot be determined as such by anything else (because all determination is a passivity, i.e., a nonbeing). God as the one who has such absolute *Being* is thus also absolutely free, whereas man, having been raised from nonbeing into being, also attains freedom by virtue of his twofold relation, albeit a most unique freedom.

That is, to the extent that man has been raised from nonbeing his root is essentially independent from Being. To be sure, the divine is the elevating and creative [force] in his spirit, yet that ground whence he springs is still distinct from the [force] that raises him. [Nonbeing] relates to God as the flower relates to the sun. Although the flower emanates from the dark earth only through the efficacy of the sun and is transfigured by light, there nevertheless remains always something whose very root exists independently of this [flower]. If the relation of man to God was not of this kind he would not have any freedom with respect to God and would be but a ray of sunlight or a spark of fire. You realize how our premise, namely, that something must be in God that is not *He Himself*, again proves altogether indispensable at this stage of our discussion. At first glance, the notion may seem offensive, particularly in light of the prevailing abstract concepts of what is called *Rational Religion*, and yet it is indispensable if we are to postulate the existence of freedom at all.²⁸

Those who defend [the existence of] freedom are ordinarily concerned only with demonstrating man's independence from nature, which is indeed an easy matter. However, they fail to consider man's inner independence from God and his freedom, relative to God, which is most difficult to demonstrate.

Hence, by virtue of occupying the middle-ground between the nonbeing of nature and the absolute Being = God, man is *free* from both. He is free from God by virtue of possessing an independent root in nature and free from nature by virtue of the fact that the divine has been kindled within him; that is, he is in the midst of, and simultaneously above, nature. The former we can call the *proper* (natural) part of man whereby he becomes an individual or a personality; the latter is his divine part. Through it he is *free*—in the human sense—by being placed at the point of indifference. It is manifest that all material life shows a progression toward man, that a continuous sequence of elevation and intensification leads to man, and that *he* is the epitome of spiritual life. [Man is] the creature in which the corporeal adapts itself to the spiritual and thus is meant to be elevated to the realm of continuity, and [this is the case] not only in man but, considering the eternal coherence of nature's products, also everywhere else in nature. However, as soon as man—rather than subordinating his natural existence to the divine—began to activate the (natural and unique) principle in himself, which is fundamentally destined to be relatively inactive, nature also had to awaken this principle within her because of the now obscure point of transfiguration [*Verklärungspunkt*]; from here on, nature had to become, *nolens volens*, a world independent of the spiritual one.

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That some such event did, in fact, take place is made manifest by (1) the present aspect of nature, (a) as regards its opaque lawfulness (for otherwise all would be plain and clear), (b) as regards the intrusion of a force of contingency, (nature does not always present itself as a strictly necessary whole), and (c) as regards the unrest in nature in its own, enclosed state when, in fact, after having attained its supreme unity it ought to be at rest. Likewise, [our previous thesis is also supported by] (2) the presence of evil and the corresponding state of the moral world. For evil is nothing but the usurpation and displacement of being by a relative nonbeing. From one perspective, [evil] is thus a nothing, yet from the other it is a most real being. Nature, too, contains evil—namely, *poison*, disease, and death—which offers consummate proof of the reality of such a relapse of all nature and of man's nature in particular.

Thus we have also presented a new conception of nature. Whereas we previously referred to [nature] as the first power, it now becomes the first *period*, for it does not attain eternity but is absorbed into time.²⁹ Nature in its present state is thus properly speaking only the first period of life, the

7,460 antechamber of the highest life, though not this life itself. Man remains a spirit, to be sure, though only under the power of B. As a spirit and being of a superior order, man is returned to the level of being, that is, to the *first power*. The process that had begun in nature starts anew from the beginning, though this time in man. He, too, must first work his way up from nonbeing, must overcome the darkness within him—and, out of this higher darkness of evil, the aberrant, and the wrong—must call forth the light of goodness, truth, and beauty. The proof that man is overwhelmed by being, and that he recedes into the first power, can be found primarily in the *domination* of his inner life by externality. Once nature's existence was threatened by man, and once nature was forced to constitute itself as its own *proper* world, it appeared that everything was directed at the preservation of this external foundation of life. Everything, even the most precious being, must perish in collision with nature, and the best forms must join forces with this externality, so to speak, if it is to be tolerated. However, what persists in this struggle and prevails as something divine against this overpowering force of external nature will have proven itself under fire, and it must veritably contain a divine power.

Meanwhile the most compelling proof for the relapse of man into nature and to the first power lies in what follows:

Man does not exist alone in this world, but there is a multiplicity of men, a *human species*, humanity.

The manifold human world strives for unity, and only there it attains completeness and happiness in the same manner as does the manifold of nature.

The true natural unity would have consisted in man and, through him, the divine and eternal. Yet nature has lost this sensitive unity through the fault of man and therefore must now seek a unity of its own. However, because the true unity cannot lie in her but only in God, nature is exposed to a continual struggle precisely on account of this separation from God. Nature seeks unity and yet does not discover it. Should it ever reach the point of its unity and transfiguration, nature would become fully organic and immersed in the spirit that has been awakened in man. Yet as nature proved unable to attain this organic unity, the inorganic raised its head. It too belongs to the species of nonbeing that has been elevated to a form of existence. It is contradictory to speak of the domain [*Reich*] of the inorganic, for a domain is a unity whereas the inorganic = nonunity. It is precisely nonbeing, however, that has come to exist and *inevitably* strives to exist.

7,461 Nature has lost its true point of unity in the same manner in which *mankind* has lost it. For mankind, this [point] consisted of a threshold or point of indifference, a point where *God Himself* would have been this unity [of mankind], for only *God* can be the unity of free beings.

Now we still have free beings, although in separation from God. They, too, must search for their unity and cannot find it. God can no longer be their

unity, and hence they must search for a natural unity that, because it cannot be the true unity of free Beings, remains but a temporal and finite bond, analogous to that bond of all entities and that which binds together inorganic nature.

The natural unity, this second nature superimposed on the first, to which man must necessarily take recourse, is the [modern] *state*;³⁰ and, to put it bluntly, the [modern] state is thus a consequence of the curse that has been placed on humanity. Because man no longer has God for his unity, he must submit to a material unity.

The idea of the state is marked by an internal contradiction. It is a natural unity, i.e., a unity whose efficacy depends solely on material means. That is, the state, even if it is being governed in a rational manner, knows well that its material power alone cannot effect anything and that it must invoke higher and spiritual motives. These, however, lie beyond its domain and cannot be controlled by the state, even though the latter boasts with being able to create a moral setting, thereby arrogating to itself a *power* equal to nature. A free spirit, however, will never consider [such] a natural unity sufficient, and a higher talisman is required; consequently, any unity that originates in the state remains inevitably precarious and provisional.

We all know of efforts that have been made, especially since the advent of the French Revolution and the Kantian concepts, to demonstrate how unity could possibly be reconciled with the existence of free beings; that is, the possibility of a state that would, properly speaking, be but the condition for the highest possible freedom of the individuals.³¹ Quite simply, such a state is an impossibility. Either the state is deprived of the proper force or, where it is granted such [force], we have despotism. (England and Greece, at least in part, are island-states.³²) Hence it is quite natural that at the end of this period during which people have been talking of nothing but freedom, the most consequent minds, in their pursuit of the idea of a perfect state, would have arrived at the worst kind of despotism (e.g., Fichte's "closed Trade-System").³³

It is my opinion that the state as such can never find a true and absolute unity and that all states are merely attempts at finding such a unity; that is, doomed attempts to become a whole and, as such, subject to the fate of all organic life, namely to bloom, to ripen, eventually to age, and finally to die. Plato has shown what we are to think of the idea of a rational state, of the ideal state, although he did not pronounce it expressly.³⁴ The true state presupposes a heaven on earth, and the true *politeia* exists only in heaven. Freedom and innocence being the exclusive conditions for the absolute state, Plato's state categorically presupposes these two elements. Yet Plato does not say that you may try to implement such a state as I am describing, but rather, if such an absolutely perfect state were to exist, it would have to be of this kind, i.e., it would presuppose freedom and innocence, and you may decide for yourselves whether such a state is actually possible.

The most convoluted situation arises with the collision among various states, and the most blatant phenomenon of the unattained and unattainable unity is that of *war*, which is as necessary as the struggle among the elements of nature. It is here that human beings enter into a relation strictly as natural beings.

To put the finishing touches on the image of a humanity that has entirely succumbed to a material and, indeed, existential, struggle, we merely need to add all those evils that can only originate in the state, such as poverty or mass hysteria.

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Having thus far studied the degradation of man, let us now turn to his *redemption* [*Wiedererhebung*]. His degradation consisted in the fact that the bond between A^2 and $A = B$ had been dissolved, and that man himself had altogether fallen prey to the external world. This gap must not remain, for otherwise it would affect God's very existence. Yet how is this gap to be bridged? Certainly not by man in his present condition. Hence only *God himself* can reestablish the bond between the spiritual and the corporeal world, namely, by means of a second *revelation*, similar to that in the original act of creation. It is here that the concept of a revelation becomes a philosophical necessity.³⁵ This revelation involves several stages; the highest stage is that where the divine defines [*verendlicht*] itself entirely, in short, where it becomes *man* and thus, as the second and divine man, comes to mediate between God and man in the same manner in which original man was meant to mediate between God and nature. It was not possible to establish an immediate rapport between God and the world of *beings* without destroying the latter as the *proper* world which it now had become. If God had wished for this to happen, no revelation would ever be necessary. Rather, any revelation already presupposes the depraved condition of the world. Notwithstanding his failure, man has been destined as the mediator for nature. Eventually, though, it was man himself who proved to be in need of mediation. Yet precisely by virtue of being restored to spiritual life, man was once again enabled to mediate between God and nature; and specifically in the appearance of Christ, it becomes apparent what man was originally intended to be in relation to nature. Christ was the lord of nature by virtue of His *mere* will, and *He* entered into that magic relation with nature that man was originally meant to assume.

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The [modern] state, when viewed as an attempt to produce the merely external unity is opposed by another institution, one based on revelation and aimed at producing an inner unity or unity of the mind; namely, the *Church*. The Church is the necessary consequence of revelation or, actually, the strict acknowledgment [*Anerkennung*] of a revelation. However, once the division between an internal and an external world has taken hold, the Church can no longer become an *external force*; instead, for as long as that division prevails, the Church will be increasingly restricted by external forces to the realm of inwardness.

The mistake made by the Church during its earlier, hierarchical period was not that it actively interfered with the state but, rather, that it permitted the state to enter the Church by opening up to the state and by assimilating the [institutional] forms of the state, rather than remaining pure. That which is true and divine may not be promoted by an external force, and as soon as the Church began to prosecute the heretics it had already lost sight of its true idea. It should have been magnanimous and sufficiently conscious of its own, divine import so as to permit heresy, rather than putting itself in a position where it had, and accepted, enemies.

In surveying more recent history, which with good reason is said to begin with the arrival of Christianity in Europe, we note that humanity had to pass through two stages in its attempt to discover or produce a unity; first that of producing an internal unity through the Church, which had to fail because the Church simultaneously sought to become the external unity and eventually attempted to produce *external* unity by means of the state. Only with the demise of hierarchical [systems] has the state attained this importance, and it is manifest that the pressure of political tyranny has increased ever since in exact proportion to the belief that an inner unity seemed dispensable; indeed it is bound to increase to a maximum intensity until, perhaps, upon the collapse of these one-dimensional attempts humanity will discover the right way.

Whatever the ultimate goal may turn out to be, this much is certain, namely, that true unity can be attained only *via* the path of religion; only the supreme and most diverse culture of religious knowledge will enable humanity, if not to abolish the state outright, then at least to ensure that the state will progressively divest itself of the blind force that governs it, and to transfigure this force into intelligence. It is not that the Church ought to dominate the state or vice versa, but that the state ought to cultivate the religious principles within itself and that the community of all peoples ought to be founded on religious convictions that, themselves, ought to become universal.³⁶

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Whatever the fate of the human species on earth may turn out to be, it is possible for the individual to repeat what man originally did with respect to the entire earth, namely, to forge a passage and seize in advance the highest being for himself.

In this manner, then, we have been led to the study of the human spirit, not as regards its external fate and ambition but in accordance with its inner essence and with the forces and powers that also inhere in the individual.

The human spirit, too, is once again composed of three such powers or aspects. The first one has man face the real world from which he was unable to free himself. This aspect is opposed by the ideal one, the aspect of man's highest transfiguration [*Verklärung*] and of his supreme spirituality. The second, medial aspect lets man place himself in the middle between the Ideal and the Real, thus granting him the freedom

either of reestablishing the bond between these two worlds or of penetrating their division.

In general, these three aspects or powers of the spirit are most appropriately expressed by the German language as temperament [*Gemüth*], spirit, and soul. Moreover each one of these is itself comprised of three powers which once again relate to one another as temperament, spirit, and soul.

I. The *temperament* constitutes the obscure principles of the spirit (for spirit is at the same time the more universal expression); it is that whereby the spirit, in a real sense, communicates with nature and by means of which it bears, in an ideal sense, a relation to the higher world, albeit obscure.

The most obscure and thus the deepest aspect of human nature is that of nostalgia [*Sehnsucht*], which is the inner gravity of the temperament, so to speak; in its most profound manifestation it appears as *melancholy* [*Schwermuth*]. It is by means of the latter that man feels a sympathetic relation to nature. What is most profound in nature is also melancholy; for it, too, mourns a lost good, and likewise such an indestructible melancholy inheres in all forms of life because all life is *founded* upon something independent from itself (whereas what is *above* it elevates while that which is *below* pulls it down.)

The next power of the temperament is that whereby it corresponds to the spirit, that is, corresponds *in general* to the character of the spirit. What we call *spirit* exists *by virtue of itself*, a flame that fuels itself. However, because as something existing, it is opposed by Being, the spirit is consequently nothing but an addiction to such Being, just as the flame is addicted to matter. The most base form of the spirit is therefore an addiction, a desire, something ethereal. Whoever wishes to grasp the concept of the spirit at its most profound roots must therefore become fully acquainted with the nature of *desire*.³⁷ In desire we witness for the first time something that exists with absolute spontaneity, and desire is something entirely inextinguishable; as far as desire is concerned, innocence can be lost only once, for [desire] is a hunger for Being, and being satiated only gives it renewed strength, i.e., a more vehement hunger. It is here that we can notice with particular clarity the inextinguishable quality of the spirit. We can easily imagine how intense this desire, this hunger for Being, may become in man once he has separated himself from Being and no longer exerts any immediate influence over it, that is, where beings are found in utter isolation.

The third power of the temperament is that of *feeling* (a sensibility like that in organic nature, whereas that which precedes it is a certain irritability). Feeling is the supreme dimension of our temperament, the grandest quality of man's temperament, and the one that he should treasure most.

The temperament is the properly Real in man, that whereby and wherein man is to effect everything. The greatest spirit will remain barren and incapable of creating or producing without temperament. Those who

wish to found science upon feeling alone are founding it upon the highest power, to be sure, although at the lowest level.

II. The second power of the spirit is that which we call *spirit* in the more specialized sense, *l'esprit*—that which is properly man's personality, and [which is] therefore the proper power of being with consciousness [*Bewusstheit*].

According to what we have said, the *universal* aspect of the spirit consists of its desire, its addiction, and its hunger for Being. In the first power, that of the temperament, which is still a preconscious aspect of man, the spirit prevails still as *mere* desire and ether, whereas here it [manifests itself] as a conscious desire, in short, as a *will*. Hence the will is properly speaking the innermost dimension of the spirit.

Still, this will contains two aspects, a real one that pertains to the individuality of man, [i.e.,] the *individual will* [*Eigenwille*], and a universal or ideal one, that of the understanding.

Hence the spirit (in its more specialized sense) has once again three powers. (a) The first one is that of the individual will, of egoism, which would be blind without the understanding. (This individual will must exist, and it is not intrinsically evil unless it becomes dominant. Virtue without an active individual will has no merit. Hence it can be argued that the good already implies the idea of evil. A good, unless it involves the overcoming of an evil, is not a real, living good. The most active, and yet subordinate, individual will is the highest good.) (b) This power is opposed by the highest one, which is the understanding. The understanding and the individual will together beget the third, middle power, (c) which is the proper will, which here appears at the point of indifference. However, it is not *this* relation—not its medial position between the understanding and the individual will—but that between the first and the third, the lowest and the highest power, which properly effects its freedom. Hence, to fully understand the essence of freedom, we must necessarily examine the third power.

To be sure, it is commonly thought that the spirit is the highest aspect of man. Yet that this cannot be so already follows from the fact that the spirit is susceptible to disease, error, since, and evil. Because disease, error, and evil always originate in the erection [*Erektion*] of a relative nonbeing on something existing, the human spirit too must once again be a relative nonbeing in relation to some superior being. For otherwise it would be impossible to distinguish between truth and error. Indeed, if there did not exist such a superior power *above* the spirit, everybody and *nobody* would be right. Given the discontinuous nature of its claims, the spirit cannot be the supreme justice. Likewise, error is not merely a *privation* of truth. Rather it is something intrinsically positive, not a deficiency in spirit but an inversion of it. Consequently, error may well prove highly ingenious [*geistreich*], and yet it is an error. Likewise, evil is not merely a privation of the good, not a mere negation of an

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inner harmony but rather a positive disharmony. Nor does it derive from the body, as many people continue to believe even today. The body is a flower from which some extract honey and others poison. It is not the body that infects the spirit but rather vice versa. It could indeed be argued that evil itself proves perhaps the most spiritual [phenomenon] yet, for it wages the most vehement war against all *Being*;³⁸ indeed, it wishes to destroy the very ground of all creation. Whoever is somewhat acquainted with the mysteries of evil (and we ought to ignore evil only with our heart, yet not with our mind) will know that the most intense corruption is precisely the most spiritual one, and that under its sway everything natural, and consequently also our sensibility and even the most base pleasure, will disappear; such corruption will turn into cruelty, and a character of demonic-devilish evil is a far more of a stranger to pleasure than a good one. Hence, if error and evil are both spiritual in kind and origin, the spirit itself cannot possibly be the highest form.

III. It follows that this highest good, the third power, is the *soul*. Already in ordinary language, we discriminate between people of spirit and those with soul. Indeed, a person endowed with spirit may well prove devoid of soul.

The soul constitutes the properly divine in *man*; hence it is something *impersonal*, the proper *Being*, to which personality as an intrinsic nonbeing shall remain subordinate. Some common doubts: (a) we speak of illnesses of the soul. To be sure, such illnesses do not exist, and only the temperament or the spirit can be ill, as I shall demonstrate with greater specificity later. (b) In ordinary life, it may well be said of a person that he has an evil, sinister, and duplicitous soul. However, this is said only in the manner in which we speak of pseudovirtues. By contrast, it would be absurd to say that a person acting in a corrupt or vicious manner acted with *soul*. In short, to speak of a sinister soul is to note the very absence of soul. (By analogy, we may characterize an error as ingenious [*geistreich*], yet never as imbued with soul [*seelenvoll*]).

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In short, the soul is something impersonal. Meanwhile, the spirit *possesses knowledge* whereas the soul does not know but is science itself. The spirit has knowledge because it also contains the possibility of evil; it can only be *good*, i.e., partake of goodness, whereas the soul is not good but is this goodness [*die Güte*] itself.

Thus an unbroken sequence proceeds from the temperament—in particular from its most profound nostalgia—and terminates in the soul. The *health* of the temperament and the spirit hinges on the continuity of this sequence and on the continuity of a nexus between the soul and the most profound realms of the temperament. For it is through the soul that man establishes a rapport with God, and no creature, especially no human being, can ever exist without this rapport. As soon as the connection breaks down, *illness* of the temperament emerges, especially if nostalgia prevails over feeling, which is tantamount to a representation of the soul within our

temperament. (1) Hence, if our affective continuity [*Leitung durch das Gefühl*] is disrupted, an affective disorder [*Gemüthskrankheit*] will be the consequence. (2) If our cognitive continuity [*Leitung durch den Verstand*] is disrupted, we are left with *nonsense*. People of the latter kind often display a strong temperament and a particularly strong individual will; the latter, however, because it is not guided by the understanding, is harmless and usually aims only at pleasure and the like. (3) However, if communication between the understanding and the soul breaks down, the most horrible specter, that of *madness*, will originate; or, rather, I should have said it *emerges* rather than originates. Let me explain myself further.

[When asked] "what is the spirit of man?" We should answer: an existence, though one [grounded] in nonbeing; hence the understanding is grounded in the irrational [*Verstandlos*]. What, then, is the *foundation* [*Basis*] of the human spirit in the proper sense of the word *foundation*? Answer: the irrational. And because the human spirit in its turn relates to the soul once again as a nonbeing, it, too, relates to the soul as something irrational. The most profound essence of the human spirit—*nota bene*: only when considered in separation from the soul and thus from God—is *madness*. Hence madness does not originate but merely surfaces when what is properly a nonbeing (i.e., the irrational) becomes an actuality and seeks to attain an essence and existence.

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In short, it is the irrational itself that constitutes the very foundation of our understanding. Consequently, madness is a necessary element, albeit one that is not supposed to manifest itself or become an actuality. What we call the *understanding*, if it is to be an actual, living, and active understanding, is therefore properly nothing other than a *coordinated* madness. The understanding can manifest itself and can become visible only in its opposite, that is, in the irrational. Human beings devoid of all madness have but an empty and barren understanding. Here we find the source for the inverted proverb: *nullum magnum ingenium sine quadam dementia*, as well as for the divine madness alluded to by Plato and the poets.³⁹ That is, when madness is dominated by the influence of the soul, it is a truly divine madness, and it proves the foundation of enthusiasm and efficacy in general. More generally, the understanding, if only it is a vigorous, living one, is properly speaking but a controlled, restrained, and coordinated madness. To be sure, there are instances when the understanding is no longer capable of controlling the madness that slumbers in the depth of our being. Thus the understanding proves unable to console us when we feel intense pain. In that case, when spirit and temperament exist without the gentle influence of the soul, this primordial, dark force surfaces and seizes the understanding (i.e., a nonbeing relative to the soul), and madness emerges as a terrifying sign of the nature of the will when separated from God.

Error originates in a similar manner, namely, when the subordinate forces, those of understanding, the will, desire, and nostalgia seek to proceed independently rather than submitting to the higher force.

Hence human freedom, properly speaking, consists precisely in the spirit being subordinate to the soul on the one hand while standing *above* the temperament on the other. Depending on whether the spirit, i.e., the will (for within the spirit the will is the spirit once again) obeys the inspirations from above, i.e., those from the soul, or those from below, i.e., those from the individual will, that is, depending on whether it elects the inferior or the superior aspect as its principle, the spirit will either act in a good or in an evil manner. If the will attempts to establish for itself an independent foundation, it will inevitably be alienated from the soul and thus from the good; yet if it submits to the soul, it will be alienated from the individual will and thereby from evil.

The soul as the absolutely divine involves no longer any proper stages. It is man's inward heaven. And yet it is capable of various relations to man's subordinate forces and thus capable of a variety of expressions. The soul may (1) relate to the Real in the subordinate powers, that is, to man's nostalgia, to his ego dynamism [*Selbstkraft*], and to the individual will. Such is the case in *art* and poetry. Nostalgia and ego dynamism are, properly speaking, the tools of art. For there they prove entirely free in their unrestricted reality, though they remain subordinate to the soul just as they ought to be. Without such an ego dynamism and a nostalgia exercising their respective influence, works of art would be devoid of all reality, whereas without the efficacy of the soul, works of art would lack all ideality. The highest form of art involves the interpenetration of the ideal and the real (with the work of art being entirely ideal and yet as real as a work of nature—which is innocence restored).

The soul can (2) relate to feeling and understanding, the two corresponding powers within the first two powers. In this manner science originates in its highest sense, namely that science that is immediately inspired by the soul—philosophy.

Here, then, we have also occasion to treat of the nature of *reason*.

7,472 Ordinarily a distinction is postulated between the understanding and reason. Yet this is entirely mistaken, for understanding and reason are the same thing, albeit considered from different perspectives. Ordinarily, too, reason is posited as superior to the understanding. Yet to do so is also only partially accurate. The understanding apparently involves something more *active*, practical, whereas *reason* seems more passive [or] submissive. Hence it makes a great difference to speak of someone as an understanding or reasonable human being. If we say that someone displayed reason, we always place the stress on the person's submission to higher considerations rather than on the person's display of activity. Hence, since the nature of reason involves apparently something submissive and passive while, at the same time, the understanding and reason can in truth only be one, we will have to state the matter thus: reason is strictly the understanding in its submission to the superior [power] of the soul. Consequently, too, reason in true science assumes

a truly passive role, whereas the soul proves active. Reason is but the recipient of truth, the book inscribed by the inspirations of the soul, yet also the touchstone of that truth. Whatever reason does not accept but rejects, whatever it will not allow to be inscribed within itself, has not been infused by the soul but is rooted in the subjectivity of the person [*Persönlichkeit*]. Reason thus relates to philosophy in the same way in which pure space functions in geometry. Whatever is false in geometry, an erroneous concept, will not be accepted by space but is rejected; e.g., a triangle whose longer side were to face the smaller angle.

All productions require a dark principle, a substratum from which the creations of a higher being are derived. In the case of philosophy this dark principle is called *feeling* [*Gefühl*]; without feeling nothing can be attained, to be sure, though this is not to say that feeling itself is the supreme [power].

Soul, reason, and feeling are the cornerstones of true philosophy, and thus philosophy has arrived at its proper construction.

The soul may (3) relate to the will and to desire. While the latter are altogether subordinate to (and in continuous rapport with) the soul, this produces not the individual, good act but the moral disposition of the soul, or *virtue*, in the highest sense, namely, as *virtus*, purity, propriety, and fortitude of the will.—The truth of the different systems of morality, of Epicureanism and Stoicism converges, I believe, in the following, supreme principle: “Permit the soul to act within you, or act as a thoroughly holy man.” Kant derives from that principle only the *formal* expression: “Act according to your soul” means simply to act not as a subjective being [*persönliches Wesen*] but in an entirely impersonal manner, without allowing your subjectivity to disrupt its influence on you. It is precisely the efficacy of the impersonal that constitutes the supreme aspect of all works, including those of art and science. In a work of art, for example, it is called objectivity, which properly designates only the contrast with subjectivity. To avail myself of an expression by my brother, in his treatise on the soul, this objectivity is attained “by the true artist in his works, by the true hero in his actions, and by the philosopher in his ideas.”^a Whenever this summit has been reached, all temporality and human subjectivity has been discarded, and we are inclined to consider the resulting works the products of the soul, independent of any human collaboration. What is divine is created, known, and produced by the divine only.

Finally, the soul may also act with strict purity, without any particular relation and altogether unconditionally. This unconditional officiating of the soul is called *religion*, not as a science but as the inner, supreme blessedness of [our] temperament and spirit. Thus virtue, science, and art are all related with

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^a*Foundation for a Future Theory of the Soul* [*Grundsätze zu einer künftigen Seelenlehre*] by Karl Eberhard Schelling, in *Annals of the Medical Sciences* [*Jahrbücher der Medicin als Wissenschaft*, vol. 2, ii, pp. 190 ff.]

religion insofar as they share the same root with the latter (which is not to say, however, that they are all *One*).

7,474 The soul corresponds to A^3 , and this A^3 constitutes divine love insofar as it is the bond of creation, that is, the identity of non-being and being, of the finite and the infinite. The nature of the soul, too, is love, and love is furthermore the principle of everything that originates in the soul.—It is generally accepted that a mild breeze has to pass over and transfigure a particular work of art. We tend to note that the most beautiful works of art have been made with love, indeed, that they are the creations of love.—Science, too, is in its highest power a work of love and thus bears rightfully the title of philosophy, i.e., love of wisdom. Anyone destined to be a philosopher feels within himself a quasi divine love, that is, an impulse not to abandon the rejected and excluded nature in this state of rejection, but to transfigure it again back into the divine and to realign the entire universe in one vast creation of love.

In this manner, then, we have restored man to the highest summit which he is capable of ascending in this life. We can do little more, then, but remark on man's fate in a future life.

All that has thus far been considered belongs properly only to the first power. For man the true, second power becomes effective only after his death. Once again, we must set out by considering life; thus we shall initially speak of the *man's transition from the first power (i.e., of Life) to the second power, namely, that of death.*

7,475 The necessity of death presupposes two strictly *incompatible* principles whose disjunction we call death. Incompatible is not what is opposed but what is contradictory; for example, being and non-being are not incompatible because they properly belong together; contrastingly, [it is a contradiction] if non-being itself seeks to become being [*ein Seyendes*], thus aiming to displace being into non-being. This is the relation between good and evil. The conflict between good and evil has been brought about *universally* by man's guilt, to be sure, though it has also been effected independently and outside of man. This contrariness in nature, of which man partakes in consequence of his corporeality, entails that the spirit cannot, in this life, appear in its *Esse* [*Being*] but must appear, partially, in its non-*Esse* [*non-being*]. Man's spirit is necessarily the [product of a] decision [*ein Entschiedenes*] (more or less decided, to be sure, since indecisiveness is itself a kind of decision, namely, to will the good only in a conditional sense); hence the spirit of man is either good or evil. Nature herself is not decisive, however, and indeed her present appearance [*Gestalt*] seems to rest on a continuous reciprocity of good and evil, such that she would not be herself but, indeed, would lose all her properties if either good or evil were to be entirely removed from her. To be sure, this conflict would have caused nature to disintegrate if it had not emerged belatedly, if this bifurcation was not secondary in relation to the unity [of nature];

though bifurcated now, nature still coheres on account of the primordial unity. Hence, because nature blends good and evil, a similar mixture can be found in all that man shares with nature, that whereby he maintains a relation to nature—in his body and his temperament (thus evil attempts above all to destroy his temperament, because the latter still contains a residue of the good). For this reason man can never appear in this life as he is in his entirety, namely, according to his spirit, and there obtains a distinction between the outer and inner man, between his *appearance* and his *being*. Man in his being is determined by his spirit, whereas the appearing man wanders about cloaked by the involuntary and inevitable conflict [between good and evil]. The good inside him is shrouded by evil that adheres to him by way of nature, cloaking his inner evil and yet tempered by the involuntary good that he possesses from nature. Yet at one point man must attain his true Being [Esse] and must be freed from his relative nonbeing. This happens when he is transposed entirely into his own A², a step that does not separate him from physical life in general but from *this* life, in short, through death or through his transition into the world of spirit.

Yet what follows man into this world of spirit? Answer: everything that *he himself* was already here; and only that stays behind which was not *he himself*. Hence man does not merely cross over into the world of spirits with his spirit in the narrow sense of the word but also with that which is *he himself* in his body, viz. the spiritual or angelic aspect of his body.⁴⁰ (Hence it is so important to recognize that it is not the body that infects the spirit but vice versa; good and evil infect the body with what is good and bad about the spirit, respectively. The body is a soil that accepts any seed, one where both good and evil can be sown. Thus the good, which man has cultivated in his body as well as the evil that he has sown in his body, will follow him in death.)

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Consequently, death marks not an absolute separation of the spirit from the body but only a separation from that corporeal element which inherently contradicts the spirit, that is, a separation of good from evil and vice versa (for which reason our remains are not called a body any longer but a *corpse*). In short, it is not merely a part of man that is immortal but all of man according to his being [Esse], and death is a *reductio ad essentiam*. That essence which does not remain behind—for that which does remain behind is the *caput mortuum*—but which is formed and which is neither merely corporeal nor merely spiritual but the corporeal aspect of the spirit and the spiritual aspect of the body, we shall refer to as the *demonic*. Hence that which is immortal in man is the demonic, [which is] not a negation of materiality but rather an essentiated [*essentificirte*] materiality. This demonic aspect thus constitutes a *most actual* essence, indeed it is far more actual than man in this life; it is what in the language of the common man (and here we may legitimately say *vox populi vox Dei*) is called—not *spirit*—but a *spirit*; such that when it is

claimed that a spirit has appeared to someone we must understand such a spirit to be precisely this most authentic, essentiated being.

7,477 Upon his death, man is not transposed into the absolute or divine A^2 but into his *own* A^2 . The divine A^2 as the absolute one is necessarily also the absolute good, and to that extent no one but God is good. Outside of God, only that is good which participates in being as a relative nonbeing; however, that which actively opposes this [latter] being is the spirit of evil. Hence the good, by being transposed into *its proper* A^2 , is naturally also being transposed into the divine A^2 ; however, the man of evil, when being transposed into his proper A^2 , will be expelled for precisely that reason from the divine A^2 in which he was still participating in this world by virtue of the mediating influence of nature. Indeed, the good man is elevated above nature whereas the evil man sinks even below nature.

Man, after his death, is commonly thought as some ethereal being or, rather abstractly, as a pure and angelic thinking. In fact, man is much rather a most authentic, and a much more powerful and actual, being after death than in this world. Proof: (a) all weakness originates in the inner division of the temperament. If only one man existed who had overcome this weakness entirely and who possessed only the good, he could move mountains. Hence we can also notice that people who already attain the demonic in this life (and usually this quality is attained in evil more decisively than in the good) possess something irresistible; they fascinate everything that opposes them, especially if what opposes them is nothing good either but, in fact, an evil that merely lacks the courage or strength to reveal itself. For the decided master or virtuoso will prevail in any subject matter of the dilettante or the imposter. (b) Also, because in this life something accidental has been mixed in, that which is the essential is weakened. Hence the spirit that has been freed from this accidental element is pure life and force, and both evil and good are more intense.

7,478 As regards the *particularity* of the inner state [in death], it is compared to that of sleep, as is well known, albeit a sleep where the inward life is extinguished by the preponderance of the outward life. More properly yet, this state ought to be understood as a lucid form of sleep or as a wakeful sleep = clairvoyance, a state involving an immediate relation with the world of objects rather than one mediated by our [sensory] organs. Is this also the case with the evil man? Answer: Darkness, too, has its light, just as being implies nonbeing. In fact, the highest state of clairvoyance is that of *madness*. Madness thus is the quintessentially infernal state [*der Zustand der Hölle*]. A[nother] question concerns our faculty of memory. [In death] this faculty will not cover everything, because an ordinary human being would already give a lot in this world to be able to forget at the right moment. Hence there will obtain a forgetting, a *lethe*, though with a different effect: once they have passed through death, the good spirits will have forgotten all evil and hence

also all suffering and pain; by contrast, the evil man will have forgotten all goodness. Furthermore, this faculty of memory will differ from the one in this life in that it is no longer necessary to *interiorize* everything; rather everything is already of an inward quality.

The concept of memory is far too weak to signify [this difference]. Of a friend or a beloved one with whom we were one heart and one soul we will say that we remember them and that they continually live within us; they do not enter our inner life but already inhere in it, such will be the quality of memory after death.

Death unites the physical (to the extent that it is essential) and the spiritual. Hence both of these, taken *together*, will be the objective foundation, whereas the soul will emerge as the subjective—although only for those who are blessed—and will become its own proper subject; this entails that the blessed ones [*die Seligen*] will come to God, that they will be bound to God. Misery [*Unseligkeit*] consists precisely of the inability of the soul to enter as a subject because of the resistance offered by the spirit, thus resulting in a separation of the soul from God.

By being transposed into his own A^2 , man is thus placed in the world of spirit. It is here, then, that the construction of the world of spirit takes place. Just as there exists a philosophy of nature there also exists a philosophy of the spiritual world. [Here are] a few remarks about this world:

Already at the very beginning, when God discriminated between the Real and the Ideal, he also had to posit the Ideal as a world of its own. Hence, just as there obtained, within the Real, the Real, the Ideal, and their indifference, all of these also obtained in the Ideal, only this time posited under the power of the Ideal.⁴¹ Hence there is, in the Ideal [form] of God, once again something that corresponds to nature, the only difference being that here this something is itself entirely ideal. As we were able to discern in our examination of man's faculties, the Real that inheres in the Ideal is [man's] temperament. God, too, has a temperament, and in the spirituality of God the latter is again the Real [element]; it relates to the *spirit* in God, to the absolute being, once again as the first power, as the foundation, or as the dark principle. The temperament in God is thus the material for the world of spirit, as indeed the properly Real proved to be the material from which the physical world and man were created. In short, the pure spirits are created from God's temperament, and thus the existence of a world of spirit is as certain—even independent of man—as there is a world of nature. We receive our temperament from nature whereas the spirits receive theirs from God Himself.

Because there also inheres a relative nonbeing and a relative being in those pure spirits that have been created from God's temperament (which exists itself once again in relative independence from the spirit in God, i.e., from the absolute Being), these spirits *too* are capable of freedom, that is, of good and evil. Just as it was God's intention to provide for a link between

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nature and the world of spirit by means of man, himself the highest creature of nature, it was probably also His intention to provide for such a link between the world of spirit and nature by means of the highest spiritual creature. If this creature failed, the world of spirit experienced the same distension [*Abfall*] and the same separation of good and evil spirit that affected the visible world. No doubt, this supreme creature of the spiritual world that was destined to master the world from one vantage point—just as man was meant to do from the other vantage point (*viz.* of nature)—sought to *master* this world without God and merely through its own power; hence it failed. Naturally, it had to be the interest of this highest created spirit to effect that this world exist in authentic separation from God, because only then could it hope to dominate it. Assuming, then, that the Fall of this spirit preceded that of man, its evil inclinations had to be directed against man, because the only possibility for a union between nature and the world of spirit now rested with man, that is, the possibility that man might receive a domain of his own, independent from God, which was indeed what man was in search of. Because, prior to his Fall, man was, in fact, closely related with the world of spirit, that higher spirit was indeed capable of exerting influence on man in a more immediate manner than now; for by now ordinary man is too inferior, even for the devil. It is the *mixed* state that is truly *inferior*; evil, strictly speaking, is in its own way something pure. It is roughly in this manner that we could explain the Christian version of the Fall.

So much about the original inhabitants of the world of spirit. Meanwhile, however, this world of spirit proves to be a world in yet another respect, namely, it is a system of objects of the same kind as nature.⁴² For nature and the world of spirit differ no more than—to use a crude though highly comprehensible example—the world of sculpture differs from that of poetry; for the figures of the latter do not manifest themselves visibly but must be created anew by everybody in an independent activity, and thus they are intuitable only in an inward sense. The world of spirit is God's poetry, and nature is His sculpture. A mediation occurs in man, namely, the visible drama, because such [a drama] presents man's spiritual creativity within the realm of reality. Hence history is most appropriately understood as a tragedy that is staged on a stage of mourning for which the world provides merely the floor, whereas the agents, *i.e.*, the actors, come from an entirely different world.⁴³ That other world contains everything that we find in this world, only in a poetic, *i.e.*, spiritual form, and hence it can be communicated in a much more perfect, and that means also in a spiritual, manner (the spirit is altogether poetry and feeling). That world contains the archetypes whereas our world contains derivative types.

To be sure, the immediate connection between nature and the world of spirit is interrupted by man; yet they do not therefore cease to be worlds and to relate to one another in a distant manner. A certain sympathy still remains

between them as it exists between the strings of different instruments, where, when a tone is produced on one of them, the corresponding string of the other instrument will resonate in a sympathetic manner. *This* relation between the world of spirit and nature thus continues indefinitely, for it is grounded in the essence of the universe as such and thus is indissoluble. And just as the world of spirit as a whole remains connected with nature by a necessary and harmonious consensus, the same connection also obtains between the *individual* objects of the world of spirit and those of nature. Thus there must also exist certain societies in the world of spirit that we can find in this world, only that in the former equal elements are joined whereas here various diverse elements are thrown together. Hence the nation that has most decisively abandoned any mixture, that is, a nation that has excluded from itself, more than any other nation, either good or evil, will be either the most pious and virtuous or the most corrupted and degenerate nation, one endowed with consummate power because it is the most demonic. Those societies wherein freedom, innocence, purity of customs, and poverty still prevail—i.e., a separation from the objects of this world—maintain close rapport with heaven and the world of benevolent spirits; contrastingly, those [nations] where the opposite is the case are a virtual hell.

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The same is the case with individual man, who, depending on whether good or evil has reached greater purity within him, stands in a relation of good or evil to the world of spirit. Through the ongoing process of life, man becomes alternately receptive or unreceptive for the world of spirit in general. Whoever happens to have strictly separated good from evil within himself would undoubtedly be capable of communicating with the good spirits who strictly shun any mixed state and who, according a passage in the Scripture, continually long to behold the inner mystery of external nature; indeed it is there that the greatest mystery is being prepared for; namely, the complete humanization of God of which thus far only the beginnings have taken place.⁴⁴ Likewise he who has cultivated exclusively evil within himself will communicate with evil spirits only. It is incomprehensible how a model as consistent as this one could have ever been seriously called into question. Our lives are imbued with continual inspiration, and any introspective being will find this to be true. Especially in serious cases man never lacks these inspirations, and if he does not have them it is his own fault. Man is never entirely abandoned, and with all the sadness that every person comes to experience, he can still be assured that he has invisible friends, a heroic creed that enables us to undertake and suffer much.

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Just as every human being bears some relation to the world of spirit, every entity in nature by virtue of its good aspect will bear some relation to heaven, while being connected through its evil aspect with the darker side of the world of spirit. Hence man must be nowhere more circumspect than in his dealings with nature, and particularly with other human beings (e.g., the

dietary precepts of the ancient philosophers). It is only on account of the mixture that the world of spirit cannot enter into the present world. However, if it were possible to cover, expel, or overcome the good in an object in its entirety, the evil spirits would be able to determine the latter. This is the source of all black magic and occultism. Meanwhile, as regards the world of spirit, let these [remarks] suffice; indeed, I may already have said too much.

Ultimately, however, the world of spirit and nature must be connected, and the higher power of the properly eternal and absolute Life must yet become an actuality. The reasons for this are the following: (1) The highest *spiritual* bliss is still not the absolute one. We wish to have *something* that is not us *ourselves*, just as God has something so as to inspect us in it as in a mirror. (2) Nature is by no fault of its own subjugated under the present state (see the passage in St. Paul), and it longs for a union.⁴⁵ (3) In an analogous way, God is in need of nature. He will not leave it in ruins forever. (4) All the powers must be truly united into one. Thus far we have only two periods: (a) the present one which comprises all the powers, to be sure, though in subordination to the Real; (b) the life of the spirit, which [period] also comprises all the powers, though in subordination to the Ideal. Hence there will be a third period, (c) where all [powers] will be subordinate to the absolute Identity—that is, [a period] where the spiritual or the Ideal no longer excludes the physical or the Real, but where both are subordinate to the higher [Being] together and as equals. This redemption, however, remains impossible for as long as the same separation has not yet taken place in nature. Yet there this separation evolves much more slowly, because it possesses a much more profound life force [*Lebenskraft*]. In this respect, man himself is a sacrifice for nature as, in turn, nature had previously been the sacrifice for man. In his perfect existence, man must await an [equally] perfect state in nature. Finally, a crisis of nature must surely come that will push the long-festering disease to the point of decision. All crisis involves some kind of exclusion. This [afore-said] crisis, then, is the last one for nature, for which reason we speak of the *final judgment*. All crisis, also in the world of matter, is a judgment [*Gericht*]. By means of a process of veritable alchemy, good and evil are separated, and evil will be altogether expelled from the good; an entirely healthy, ethical, pure, and innocent nature will result from this crisis. It will comprise nothing but true being, which is possible only in the *correct* proportion; hence nature will be freed from all false being, that is, from nonbeing. Instead, this nonbeing, which previously had arrogated to itself the status of Being in nature is now being subordinated *to nature* as its foundation; this nonbeing, then, is placed at the utmost depth *below* nature, and with nature herself being an already tempered variant of the divine egoism, this nonbeing will be consumed by the fire of the latter, i.e., by hell. Following this last catastrophe, then, hell would be the foundation of nature, analogous to nature herself,

which is the foundation or basis of heaven, i.e., of the divine presence. At that point, evil no longer exists in relation to God and the universe but only within itself. It will have attained what it had always sought, a state of total self-enclosure, that is, a separation from the universal, divine world. It is henceforth subject to the tortures of its own egoism and to the hunger of self-addiction.

Through the separation in nature each of its elements attains the closest and most immediate relation to the world of spirit. For that reason we speak of a rebirth of the dead. The world of spirit enters into the real world. The evil spirits, too, receive their body from the element of evil just as the good spirits will receive theirs from the good, that certain fifth element, namely, divine matter.

The supreme purpose of creation has now been fulfilled: (a) God is now entirely actual, visibly corporeal, that is,

$$\frac{A_3}{A^2 = (A = B)},$$

(b) what was most inferior will have become the most superior (a reversal of beginning and end), only that everything which thus far had been implicit will now become explicit, (c) especially the mystery of *mankind*. In man, the two utmost extremes have been connected. Hence God holds man in higher esteem than the angels. Man comprises the most inferior and the most superior elements; and humanity, which had already been deified by God become man, is now deified both in a universal sense and by man in particular; and with man nature, too, [becomes deified].

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If we wished to be consistent, we would have to recognize the periods or powers in this *third* period as well. However, these are so far removed from our perspective as (to use only an effaced metaphor) the most remote speck of fog, impenetrable to any telescope other than our bodily [eye]. Hence, if indeed there still obtain three periods, they must be placed in a successive hierarchy: (a) the period of God as He has become man (and, perhaps, still a particular dominion of the worlds of nature and spirit, though without separation); (b) the dominion of the spirit; (c) finally everything is transferred unto our Father. This may perhaps be the state when hell ceases to exist; and it is in these periods of eternity that the restitution [*Wiederbringung*] of evil takes place, which is something we must necessarily believe in. Sin is not eternal, and hence its consequences cannot be so either.

This last period within the last is that of the entirely perfect fulfillment—that is, of the complete becoming man of God—the one where the infinite will have become finite without therefore suffering in its infinitude.

Then God is in all actuality everything, and pantheism will have become true.

NOTES

Treatise Explicatory of the Idealism in the Science of Knowledge

1. Karl Heinrich Heydenreich (1764–1801), poet and philosophical author, taught philosophy at Leipzig from 1785 until 1798; his popularizing and sentimentalizing lectures on Kant's aesthetics earned him brief recognition, which was soon followed by harsh criticisms by Goethe, Schiller, and Schelling. Heydenreich appears to have been a somewhat unstable character, given to heavy drinking and poor financial management. He remained, however, rather productive throughout his years at Leipzig University. *Heinsius Allgemeines Bücherlexicon* (Leipzig: J. F. Gleditsch, 1812) lists no less than twenty-four publications on moral, aesthetic, and natural philosophy. Heydenreich's protest (in the *Allgemeine Leipziger Zeitung*, #45, 1797) against Schelling's acerbic critique is rejected by Schelling at the end of volume 5 of the *Philosophisches Journal*: "That your Letters on Atheism are still being perused by numerous readers merely proves that there are still a good many people who will read bad books. To claim that I am a pretentious writer in no way helps your cause. To call my critique shallow hogwash serves as proof against you rather than me . . ." (*Notizenblatt*, added to *Philosophisches Journal* 5, no. 2:31.)

2. Johan Kaspar Lavater's "Aussichten in die Ewigkeit" [*Perspectives on Eternity*] was published in 1770. The distinction between a dogmatic and a symbolic zoomorphism is made by Heydenreich in his "Letters on Atheism," pp. 138–140.

3. Such a nomenclature was proposed in 1787 by Louis Bernard Guyton de Morveau, Antoine Laurent Lavoisier, Claude Louis Berthollet, and Antoine Francois de Fourcroy to the Royal Academy of the Sciences at Paris and published as "Methode de Nomenclature chimique, Proposée par MM. de Morveau, Lavoisier, Bertholet, et de Fourcroy" (Paris: 1787).

4. Both in syntax and content, Schelling's argument here recalls the opening, massively anaphoric paragraphs of Friedrich Hölderlin's essay "On the Process of the Poetic Spirit," written in the year 1800. Even though their friendship was to fade rapidly after 1800, Hölderlin and Schelling were both keenly attuned to the fundamental implication of Kant's and Fichte's critical idealisms for the question of aesthetic representation. For a translation of Hölderlin's theoretical writings, see the Bibliography.

5. *Odi profanum vulgus et arceo*. Horace, *Odes* III,i. "I hate the uninitiate crowd and keep them far away."

6. *Spontaneous* translates the German *willkürlich*, a concept that at the beginning of the nineteenth century is usually situated between the instinctual and the will. The concept “spontaneity” (following the latin phrase *sua sponte*) appears to designate an act of consciousness that is not yet reflected and intentional yet which is not causally determined by anything outside itself either. For Fichte, “spontaneity” constitutes the foundation of the will (“*kein Wille ohne Willkür*”). See Grimm’s *Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*.

7. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (A 100–1/132–33^{ENG}), on the “Synthesis of Reproduction in Imagination.”

8. The distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments is, of course, central to Kant’s transcendental argument; see *Critique of Pure Reason* (B 10–18/48–9^{ENG}). Schelling takes up the concept of substance in his *System* of 1804 (6,178–79), translated below.

9. *Doctrina, per tot manus tradita, tandem in vappam desit*. “Knowledge, transmitted by such hand, will finally perish in nothingness.” Provenance unknown.

10. Kant’s chapter on the “Schematism of the Pure Concepts of Understanding” proves indeed, as noted by Herder and, much later, elaborated by Heidegger (1928), the crucial capstone in the architectonic of pure reason. The “schema” serves as Kant’s answer to the fundamental question of the *Critique*; namely, “how . . . the *subsumption* of intuitions under pure concepts, the *application* of a category to appearances [is] possible” (B 177/180^{ENG}). See my critical introduction to this book.

11. Schelling’s distinction between a positive activity and a negative activity, to be reconciled in the act of intuition, generally follows Kant’s distinction between the “transcendental ideality” and the “empirical reality” of space, respectively; see *Critique of Pure Reason* (B 44/72^{ENG}) as well as Kant’s refutation of a pure Idealism, such as denies the reality of “outside” existence altogether, in the Preface to the second edition (B xl n./34^{ENG}).

12. See David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (London, 1777), especially pages 48–49, 80, 173–174.

13. The conception of truth as a “correspondence” of subject and object in a judgment is taken up by Schelling at the beginning of his *System* of 1804 (6,137 ff.), translated below.

14. In his definition of *spirit* Schelling appears to follow Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*: “Spirit, in an aesthetical sense, is the name given to the animating principle of the mind. But that by means of which this principle animates the soul, the material which it applies to that [purpose], is what puts the

mental powers purposely into swing [*Schwung*], i.e., into such a play as maintains itself and strengthens the mental powers in their exercise. Now I maintain that this principle is no other than the faculty of presenting aesthetic ideas . . . [that] strive after something which lies beyond the bounds of experience" (A 192/157^{ENG}).

15. The argument anticipates Schelling's next publication, already being prepared while installments of the present text are being published in the *Journal*, namely the *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (1797). The thesis of an ascending scale of reflexivity advanced in that text remains a motif throughout Schelling's middle period as well; see the *Stuttgart Private Lectures*, translated later (7,446 ff.).

16. In what follows, Schelling develops an earlier version of the dialectic movement from original sensation, to productive intuition, to reflection, to the absolute act of the will, as developed in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800); see 3,388–530.

17. *Facturusne operae pretium sim . . . nec satis scio*. "Whether I am likely to accomplish anything . . . I cannot know." Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, "Praefatio" I.

18. *Critique of Practical Reason* (A 162/197^{ENG}).

19. For the next three pages, Schelling attends only to the first alternative, i.e., "our intuition is merely passive." The alternative position, i.e., "intuition is completely active," is taken up later (1,379).

20. *Formae intentionales*. Neither the *Sämmtliche Werke* nor the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* of Schelling's text offer any hints as to the concept and its proponents. The term does not appear in Aristotle nor in the commentaries of St. Thomas Aquinas.

21. "Inter systematis mei Harmoniae generalis leges una haec est, quod praesens gravidum futuro, et, qui omnia videt, in eo, quod nunc est, id, quod futurum est, videat." G. W. Leibniz, *Tentaminum Theodicaeae* § 360, *Opera Omnia*, ed. Ludovico Dutens (Geneva: Fratres de Tournes, 1768), vol. I, p. 374.

22. The distinction between archetype and ektype (*Urbild* and *Nachbild*) derives, of course, from Kant. However, the conception of nature as an archetype of the original intellect (*archetypus intellectus*) that Kant had claimed to be inaccessible to rational cognition (impossibility of an intellectual intuition), first surfaces in Schelling and Goethe. Virtually simultaneous with Schelling's *Treatise*, Goethe wrote several of his didactic nature poems (*Lehrgedichte*), most notably "Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen" and "Die Metamorphose der Tiere." In the latter poem the term *Urbild* is first used by

Goethe. See *Werke* (Hamburger Ausgabe), vol. I, pp. 199–201. Later, in his 1817 essay, “Anschauende Urteilskraft,” and other brief writings (first published in 1820), Goethe comments once again on the dominant influence of Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* for the development of the Romantic philosophy of nature. *Werke*, vol. XIII, pp. 30–37.,

23. Compare G. W. Leibniz, “Principia Philosophiae” (= “Monadology”), in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Ludovico Dutens (Geneva: Fratres de Tournes, 1768) vol. II, i, p. 27. See also Leibniz’s earlier essay, “Meditationes de Cognitione, Veritate, atque Ideis,” in the same volume, pp. 14–18, and reprinted in *Die Philosophischen Schriften*, ed. C. J. Gerhardt (reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1960), vol. IV, pp. 422–426. There Leibniz offers a first, systematic discussion and differentiation of an ascending order of representation. For translations of the 1714 “Monadology” and the earlier “Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas” (1684), see Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, ed. Leroy E. Loemker (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1969, pp. 643–653 and 291–295.

24. The subsequent example of electricity receives a more ample presentation in Schelling’s *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (2: 122–46/96–113^{ENG}).

25. As the editors of the *Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe* note, Schelling follows an earlier treatment of the electric constitution of the animal nervous system by Christian Heinrich Pfaff, *Über thierische Elektrizität und Reizbarkeit* (Leipzig, 1795), pp. 258–259. In a letter of March 6, 1798, Schelling reaffirms his general agreement with Pfaff, who had visited him in Leipzig; see *Briefe*, vol. I, p. 120.

26. See Hesiod, *Theogony*, 11. 923–26.

27. Schelling is quoting almost verbatim from the pivotal chapter on the “Schematism of the Pure Concepts of Understanding” in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*; “This schematism of our understanding, in its application to appearances and their mere form, is an art concealed in the depth of the human soul, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely to ever allow us to discover, and to have open to our gaze” (A 141/183^{ENG}). Schelling discusses the significance of the schema more extensively, and distinguishes between its empirical and transcendental application, in his *System* (1800); see 3,508–23. The “transcendental schema” constitutes the very capstone of theoretical philosophy, and its very occurrence, motivated by what Schelling calls an *absolute act of will*, reveals the continuity between the theoretical and practical domains of philosophy.

28. Regarding Schelling’s borrowing of *Schwung* from Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, see note 14.

29. The concept of “volition” [*Wollen*] is elaborated further in Schelling’s *System*, 3,541 ff. See also my Introduction, pp. 32–35.

30. Schelling is referring to Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi’s “Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn” (Breslau, 1789). A relevant passage in this dialogic text has Lessing remark: “Do you recall a passage in Leibniz where it is said of God that He is in a constant alternation of expansion and contraction; this would be the creation and continuity of the world,” F. H. Jacobi, *Werke* (Leipzig, 1819), vol. 4, i, p. 64. Regarding Jacobi, see also note 41.

31. See *Critique of Practical Reason* (A 169–70/200^{ENG}).

32. *Ibid.*, (A 177–78/204–5^{ENG}).

33. See Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (1797): “Seldom have great minds lived at the same time without working from altogether different angles towards the same objective. Whereas Leibniz based the system of the spiritual world on the pre-established harmony, Newton found the system of a material world in the equilibrium of world-forces. but if, after all, there is unity in the system of our knowledge, and if we ever succeed in uniting the very last extremes of that system, we must hope that even here, where Leibniz and Newton diverged, an allembicing mind will at some time find the midpoint round which the *universe of our knowledge moves*—the two worlds between which our knowledge is at present still divided” (2, 24–125/19^{ENG}).

34. Kant’s late text, “Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie,” published in 1796, vehemently attacks the Idealist transformation of his critical philosophy. The passage involving Archimedes, quoted by Schelling, reads as follows: “Here, then, we have what Archimedes needed but could not find: a firm point at which Reason can apply its lever, and where it can do so in such a manner that it would not merely apply it to the present, let alone to a future world, but strictly to its inner idea of freedom, which itself is firmly grounded in the unshakeable moral law, and which therefore is capable of moving the human will even if human nature should prove altogether resistant” (A 420), translation mine.

35. Regarding the pivotal function of this concept for the Idealist construction of an autonomous and self-present subject, see especially Fichte’s remarks in his “Second Introduction to the *Science of Knowledge*” (I,4: 216–27/38–47^{ENG}) and in his “Review of Aenesidemus” (I,2: 41–67). A translation of the review can be found in George di Giovanni and H. S. Harris, eds., *Between Kant and Hegel*; for the relevant passages, see pp. 147, 151–152. About the significant differences between Schelling’s use of “intellectual intuition” and the function of that concept in the early Fichte, see Moltke

Gram, "Intellectual Intuition: The Continuity Thesis," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 42 (1981): 287–304.

36. As Manfred Frank notes (*Eine Einführung in Schellings Philosophie*, pp. 23–347), Schelling appears to be the only writer to have taken note of this passage in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* where Kant clearly postulates something quite akin to Fichte's concept of an "intellectual intuition": "The 'I think' precedes the experience which is required to determine the object of perception through the category in respect of time; and the existence here [referred to] is not a category. . . . For it must be observed, that when I have called the proposition, 'I think', an empirical proposition, I do not mean to say thereby, that the 'I' in this proposition is an empirical representation. On the contrary, it is purely intellectual, because belonging to thought in general" *Critique of Pure Reason* (B423/378^{ENG}). Just before the passage cited, Kant had already characterized this "I think" as an "indeterminate empirical intuition, i.e., perception" (B 422.378^{ENG}). See also my "Critical Introduction."

37. The text, of course, is Fichte's "Second Introduction to the *Science of Knowledge* for Readers Who Already Have a Philosophical System."

38. Schelling is, at least in part, responding to Kant's critical remarks in his "Von einem neuerdings erhobenen Ton . . ." Kant specifically takes exception with what he perceives to be the infelicitous impact of Enthusiasm on philosophy, specifically of intellectuals like Hemsterhuis and Shaftsbury, a development that Kant explains as a misappropriation of Plato. For Kant, such an unwarranted extension of philosophical concepts beyond what is properly matched by a corresponding intuition reaches dangerous proportions in the work of the early Fichte.

39. As the editors of the *Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe* of Schelling's text note, Kant did indeed make such a statement about the way that he would like to see the exegesis of his texts performed. See, "Erklärung" in the *Intelligenzblatt der Allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung* (no. 74, June 14, 1797; column 616). Schelling's repeated binarism of spirit and letter reflects a rather popular topic during the last decade of the century; Fichte had held lectures in Jena "Concerning the Difference Between the Spirit and the Letter Within Philosophy" (trans. D. Breazeale, in J. G. Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings*, pp. 185–215). A later essay by Fichte ("A Series of Letters Concerning the Spirit and the Letter Within Philosophy") also exists, though its aesthetic orientation constitutes a clear departure from the earlier, and more strictly philosophical, text of 1795, surprisingly rejected by Schiller, who had commissioned the piece for his journal *Die Horen*. See Daniel Breazeale's introduction, pp. 185, 186n.

40. Benedikt Stattler earned considerable notoriety with his numerous writings against Kant's philosophy. Among these treatises are his *Anti-Kant*

(Munich, 1788), *Anhang zum Anti-Kant in einer Widerlegung der Kantischen Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (Munich, 1788), as well as “Kurzer Entwurf der unausstehlichen Ungereimtheiten der Kantischen Philosophie, sammt dem Seichtdenken so mancher gutmüthigen Hochschätzer derselben” (Munich, 1791).

41. Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743–1819) was a highly influential, neo-Platonist and protestant religious philosopher. During the 1770s, Jacobi wrote and gradually expanded, under changing titles, two highly influential epistolary novels (*Allwill*, 1775–92 and *Woldemar*, 1777–92). Profoundly influenced by Spinoza, Rousseau, Kant, and Lessing, Jacobi’s philosophical writings deal with a vast array of political, religious, and intellectual issues. Schelling’s acknowledgment of Jacobi’s recognition of the supersensible as the foundation of all sensibility refers in all probability to Jacobi’s 1787 essay against Hume’s religious skepticism, “David Hume über den Glauben” (Breslau, 1787), and retitled, for its second edition, as “Über den transcendentalen Idealismus” (Breslau, 1789). It is here that Jacobi insists on the primacy of “taking in good faith” all sensation and feeling, that is, on the implied faith in the immediate and authentic correspondence between external stimuli and internal sensation. Horst Fuhrmans rightly notes, however, that Jacobi’s emphatic rejection of Spinoza in particular actually increased an interest in the latter dramatically among Jacobi’s intellectual contemporaries. cf. Schellings *Philosophie der Weltalter*, pp. 24f.

42. Friedrich Victor Lebrecht Plessing (1749–1806) was the author of numerous philosophical and philological studies that are primarily concerned with Greek philosophy and learning. His *Mnemonium oder Versuche zur Enthüllung der Geheimnisse des Alterthums* was published in two volumes in 1786–87 and earned him, along with some earlier writings, a professorship at the small University at Duisburg. His intellectual biography is characterized by an ongoing attempt to take refuge in a highly rarified and isolated doctrine of Platonic Ideas, which also appears to be the focus of Schelling’s critical remark. The resurgence of interest in Plato as the philosophical authority to facilitate the popular reception of Kant’s critical philosophy also receives some critical attention in Salomon Maimon’s “Pragmatische Geschichte des Begriffs von Philosophie, und Beurtheilung der neuern Methode zu philosophiren,” *Philosophisches Journal* 6 (1797): 150–181.

43. Kant is responding to Johann August Eberhard (1739–1809), whose reputation and notoriety are largely the result of his sustained attacks on Lessing and Kant. The Kant-Eberhard controversy culminates in Kant’s response of 1790, “On a Discovery According to Which Any New Critique of Pure Reason Has Been Made Superfluous by an Earlier One,” quoted here by Schelling; the translation follows Henry E. Allison’s highly detailed edition of

The Kant-Eberhard Controversy (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), (*Werkausgabe*, vol. 5, BA 56/130^{ENG}).

44. *Critique of Pure Reason* (B 109–10/115–16^{ENG}).

45. Compare the following, related passage from the *Critique of Practical Reason*: “Now is explained the enigma of the critical philosophy, which lies in the fact that we must renounce the objective reality of the supersensible use of the categories in speculation and yet can attribute this reality to them in respect to the objects of pure practical reason. This must have seemed an inconsistency so long as the practical use of reason was known only by name. However, a thorough analysis of the practical use of reason makes it clear that the reality thought of here implies no theoretical determination of the categories and no extension of our knowledge to the supersensible” (A 7–8/120^{ENG}).

46. Karl Leonhard Reinhold’s essay, “Über den gegenwärtigen Zustand der Metaphysik und der transcendentalen Philosophie überhaupt,” was published in response to the essay contest held by the Prussian Academy regarding the progress of metaphysics since Leibniz and Wolff. The essay was published in Reinhold’s *Auswahl vermischter Schriften* (Jena, 1797). Karl Leonhard Reinhold (1758–1825) is generally considered the most significant transitional figure between Kant and Fichte; Reinhold popularized Kant’s critical philosophy and also sought to derive an elaborate methodology from it. His most significant works are “Letters on Kantian Philosophy” (1790–92), “Essay on a New Theory of the Human Faculty of Representation” (1789; 2d ed., 1795), and his “Contributions Corrective of the Misconceptions of Recent Philosophers” (1790–94). Reinhold lectured at Jena until 1794 and then replaced Tetens at the University of Kiel.

47. Although the overtones of Schelling’s discussion are unmistakably Fichtean, Schelling is nevertheless still quoting from Reinhold’s essay. Corresponding passages from Fichte’s *Science of Knowledge* (1794–95), especially as regards the basic proposition of Fichte’s *Tathandlung* (“Act”) and *Setzung* (“positing”) can be found in the *Science of Knowledge* (WL, 101–10/SK 102–10).

48. The context for Schelling’s reference to Reinhold, for which no precisely matching passage can be found, lies ultimately in the circular logic of Fichte’s *Science of Knowledge*, specifically, in the paradox of an absolute self that simultaneously posits itself as infinite, that is, claiming the totality of the real for its own activity, and as limited by the not-Self. Fichte resolves this dilemma by suggesting that the “self posits itself as determined by the not-self” (WL 218/SK 195), and the “as,” Dieter Henrich argues, marks the intervention of a stratum of representation in this entire “act.” “Fichte’s Original Insight,” trans. David Lachterman, *Contemporary German Philosophy* 1 (1982):

15–53. Schelling’s restatement of Fichte’s argument about the necessity of us not being limited without “*feeling* this limitation,” relates to Fichte’s grounding of the self’s determination by the not-self in what is called the *feeling* of determinability, and, as such, is not a product of the conscious will but of the imagination: “the determinability here referred to is a feeling” (WL 211/SK 190). See my “Critical Introduction.”

49. Jakob Sigismund Beck (1761–1840) was a student of Kant at Königsberg and an avid, though often highly idiosyncratic, promoter of Kant’s philosophy. Beck was professor at Halle (1791–99) and eventually professor of metaphysics at the University at Rostock (1799–1824). His two major texts, moderately influential in the early reception and development of Kant between 1791–96, are an *Erläuternder Auszug aus den Schriften des Prof. I. Kant* and, more notorious, his *Einzig möglicher Standpunkt, aus welchem die kritische Philosophie beurteilt werden muss* (both published in 1793). For a discussion of Beck’s contributions to the early post-Kantian debate, see Ernst Cassirer, *Das Erkenntnisproblem*, vol. III, pp. 69–80.

50. Schelling’s distinction between a conscious or intentional and an unconscious recovery of the subject’s own past, which anticipates Hegel’s speculative thesis concerning the correlated, systematic, and historical dimensions of the movement of absolute reflection, hinges on Plato’s distinction between *mnemosyne* and *anamnesis*. See Plato, *Phaedo*, 72–76; and *Phaedrus*, 246a–250c.

51. *Ignavum fucos pecus a praesepeibus arcent.* “Drive from their folds the drones, a sluggard flock.” Virgil, *Aeneid*, I, 435.

52. Schelling is quoting from a note in the second Introduction to the *Critique of Judgment* (B LVII/34^{ENG}). The syntax of Kant’s text is slightly altered in Schelling’s quotation. See also the corresponding remarks on the table of the categories in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (A 109–10/137–38^{ENG}).

53. Schelling here reiterates Kant’s postulate of “freedom” as found in the chapter on the “Antinomies of Pure Reason” (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A 444/409^{ENG}) and as elaborated in the *Critique of Practical Reason*: “In the concept of a will, however, the concept of causality is already contained; thus in that of a pure will there is the concept of causality with freedom, i.e., of a causality not determinable according to natural laws and consequently not susceptible to any empirical intuition as proof” (B 96–97/164^{ENG}). The issue concerning the metaphysical implications of “freedom,” which Kant’s critical philosophy restricts to the status of a “postulate” of practical reason, continues to inform much of Schelling’s later philosophy, most notably his 1809 treatise, “Of Human Freedom.”

54. Kant's essay, *Versuch den Begriff der negativen Grössen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen* was published by Jacob Kanter in 1763. See *Werkausgabe*, vol. II, pp. 777–819.

55. The term *Willkür*, here translated as “spontaneity,” is extraordinarily complex; *Grimm's Wörterbuch* distinguishes between its logical and political usage during the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century. In the case of the former, the word hovers between the unconscious and involuntary “reflex” and “natural drive” and the autonomous will exercising a free and self-conscious choice (see, p. 206, b). Its political usage is by and large pejorative, connoting a gratuitous or random action by a superior political or, occasionally, by a overwhelming natural power (p. 211, b). See note 6.

56. Schelling might be thinking of a passage in Chapter 2 of the “Analytic of Pure Practical Reason,” where Kant notes that when “a principle of reason is thought of as already the determining ground of the will without reference to possible objects of the faculty of desire . . . that principle is a practical law a priori, and pure reason is assumed to be in itself practical” (*Critique of Practical Reason*, A 109/171^{ENG}). In the same text Kant also notes that “freedom and unconditional practical law reciprocally imply each other. I do not here ask whether they are actually different, instead of an unconditional law being merely the self-consciousness of a pure practical reason, and thus identical with the positive conception of freedom. The question now is whether our *knowledge* of the unconditionally practical takes its inception from freedom or from the practical law. It cannot start from freedom or from the practical law” (A 52/140^{ENG}). Instead, Kant notes shortly afterwards, “the autonomy of the will is the sole principle of all moral laws and of the duties conforming to them” (A 58/144^{ENG}). Schelling's subsequent reference to Kant's “Metaphysical Elements of Justice,” which constitute the Part I of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, can be found in the “Introduction”: “The Will is the faculty of desire regarded not, as is will, in its relation to action but rather in its relation to the ground determining will to action [*Willkür zur Handlung*]. The Will itself has no determining ground; but insofar as it can determine will, it is practical reason itself” (A 5/12^{ENG}).

57. Kant, “Metaphysical Elements of Justice,” itself Part I of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, *Werkausgabe*, vol. VIII (AB 26–8/27–28^{ENG}). See also note 56.

58. See Schelling's “Of Human Freedom” (1809), 7,367 ff.

59. For the passage in Kant's text to which Schelling makes reference here, see note 57.

60. Schelling is quoting from his own, early essay “Of the Self as a Principle of Philosophy” (1,235/122^{ENG}).

61. Once again, Schelling is referring to a passage quoted earlier from Kant's "Metaphysical Elements of Justice"; see note 57.

62. According to the editors of the *Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe*, Schelling may be thinking of the following passage from Kant's *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*: "If the good = a, then its diametric opposite is the not-good. This latter is the result either of a mere absence of a basis of goodness, = 0, or of a positive ground of the opposite of good, = -a. In the second case the not-good may also be called positive evil . . ." (A 10n./18^{ENG}).

63. Schelling is quoting from his own essay, "Of the Self as the Principle of Philosophy" (1,236–37/123^{ENG}).

64. Ovid, *Tristia* V,10: 37.

65. Schelling is referring to Fichte. Compare the following passage in the "Second Introduction to the *Science of Knowledge*," which, as we recall, was also first published in the *Philosophisches Journal*: "If even a single person is completely convinced of his philosophy, and at all hours alike; if he is utterly at one with himself about it; if his free judgment in philosophizing and what life obtrudes upon him, are perfectly in accord; then in this person philosophy has completed its circuit and attained its goal. For it assuredly has set him down again at the point whence he started with all the rest of mankind; and now philosophy, as a science, is genuinely present in the world, even if no man but this one should grasp or accept it, and even if this one should be quite unable to give it outward expression. . . . Leibniz, too, could have been convinced; for, properly understood—and why should he not have properly understood himself?—he is correct. If supreme facility and freedom of mind are evidence of conviction; if dexterity in adapting his conceptions to every form, in applying them spontaneously to every portion of human knowledge, in readily allaying every doubt that arises, and in employing his system, in general, more as an instrument than an object; if candor, cheerfulness and good humor in life are evidence of unity with oneself: then Leibniz had conviction, and was the only example of it in the history of philosophy" (1,4:263–65/81–83^{ENG}).

66. Plato, *Meno*, 82a–85b.

67. Schelling's interest in the medical sciences and in human physiology in particular might have brought him into contact with Florent Schuyll's edition of Renatus Descartes, *De Homine: Figuris et latinate donatus a Florentio Schuyll* (Leiden, 1662) or with Gérard van Gutschoven's *L'Homme de René Descartes, et la Formation du Foetus, Avec les Remarques de Lovis de la Forge* (Paris, 2nd ed. 1677). Both texts contained illustrations of the human brain, and those of Gutschoven's text have been reprinted in Charles Adam and Paul Tannery's edition of *Oeuvres de Descartes* (Paris, 1909). [I follow the

annotation of the editors of the *Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe*, who in turn acknowledge scholarly debts of their own.]

68. See *Critique of Pure Reason* (B 133–34/153–54^{ENG}).

69. Schelling is referring to his “Antikritik,” an essay published in the “Intelligenzblatt der *Allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung*” (no. 165, December 10, 1796); there Schelling responded to a very acerbic review of his early essay, “Of the Self as the Principle of Philosophy,” by Johann Benjamin Erhard, which had been published in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (no. 319, October 11, 1796). The “Antikritik” is reprinted in the text of the *Abhandlungen* of the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*.

70. The full title of this essay, for which no author could be established, is “An Apology for the Attempts to Raise the Critical Philosophy to Science *kat exochen* by Means of Elementary Philosophy and by Means of the Science of Knowledge,” *Philosophisches Journal* 6, no. 7 (1797): 239–298.

71. For relevant passages in Fichte’s *Science of Knowledge*, see *WL*, 253, 261n./224, 230n.^{ENG}.

72. See *Critique of Practical Reason* (A 238 ff./234–36^{ENG}).

System of Philosophy in General and the Philosophy of Nature in Particular

1. The critique of the traditional concept of reflection, derived from Kant’s notion of a “transcendental reflection” (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A 260–92/277–96^{ENG}), constitutes one of the cornerstones of Schelling’s philosophy of identity. In his *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie* (1801), Schelling argues that the opposition of subject and object in reflection is formal, not essential; hence reflection invariably presupposes an identity as the condition of possibility for any discrimination between subject and object (4,126n.). Schelling’s critique of the concept of reflection is further elaborated in the context of his vehement polemic against Fichte in his *Darstellung des wahren Verhältnisses der Naturphilosophie zur verbesserten Fichteschen Lehre* (1806), with Schelling elaborating on the difference between reflection and synthesis: reflection posits the difference between the subject and object of reflection as something “real” whereas synthesis regards it as something “ideal” (7,48–70). What Schelling calls the *Absolute* is not, however, the result of such synthesis but, instead, precedes as a primordial “indifference” any reflective disjunction. It is here that Schelling’s misgivings regarding Hegel’s conception of a “speculative reflection” are rooted. Regarding remarks of the later

Schelling on reflection, see especially his *Initia Philosophiae Universae* of 1820–21, where he takes up an early Romantic paradigm of reflection as *ordo inversus* (46–9, Enderlein version).

2. Schelling's *Initia Philosophiae Universae* reiterate this notion (see pp. 19, 72), with Schelling alluding to St. Paul (1 Cor. 7:19).

3. This is referred to in Schelling's *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie* (1801) as *identity of identity*. Schelling's significant deviation from Hegel, whose dialectic of experience is beginning to take shape in his Jena writings around this time, involves the subordination of the concept of time under that of identity. "This identity is not some product but the most primordial, and it is only being produced because it already is" (4, 128). The absolute, conceived of as this identity, must already anticipate "the possibility of reflection and of the discrimination of the so called 'real' world which is simultaneously implied [in the concept of reflection]" *Fernere Darstellungen*, (4,386).

4. A note by K. F. A. Schelling refers to a related passage in Schelling's treatise *Über das Verhältnis der Naturphilosophie zur Philosophie überhaupt* (5,110).

5. Schelling's insistence on the incompatibility of the Absolute with the traditional paradigm of subjectivity causes him later to revise the Fichtean concept of an "intellectual intuition" and, eventually, to replace it with the concept of *ekstasis*. See his *Initia Philosophiae Universae* (47–48; Enderlein version). For Schelling's use of *intellectual intuition*, see 4,369–70.

6. A note by K. F. A. Schelling refers to a related passage in Schelling's *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (2,60–61/46–47^{ENG}).

7. I have not been able to determine the text by Fichte from which Schelling is quoting here.

8. Again, no reference for Schelling's quote from Fichte could be established. The issue raised by Schelling here receives further and rather polemical attention in Schelling's *Darlegung des wahren Verhältnisses der Naturphilosophie zur verbesserten Fichteschen Lehre*, which was published in 1806. See especially Schelling's critique of Fichte's failure to overcome the traditional concept of identity as synthesis, as it had been established by Kant. Fichte, he charges, can attain only "an empty unity that is not creative" (*die leere unschöpferische Einheit*). "Hence, in positing such a unity, he leaves the conflict between this [unity] and opposition itself intact" (7,52). See also Schelling's earlier, less acerbic disagreement with Fichte's concept of reflection in his *Fernere Darstellungen aus dem System der Philosophie*, 4,353–57.

9. Compare Schelling's explication of the proposition of identity, $A = A$, to Fichte's discussion in the *Science of Knowledge* (WK, 256/SK 94). Unlike

Fichte, Schelling does not conceive of the oral identity—expressed as “ $A = A$ ”—as a derivative of the more udamtal and actual postulate $I = I$, which is Fichte’s argument. On the contrary, if “ $A = A \dots$ constitutes the only principle of unconditional and absolute knowledge,” as Schelling observes, such knowledge does “not [involve] the *subject* as [a] subject that knows but reason” (6,147). After a still rather Fichtean application of the proposition in his 1800 *System* (3,365 f.), Schelling begins to criticize the subjectivist implications of the proposition in his 1806 essay *Darlegung des wahren Verhältnisses der Naturphilosophie zur verbesserten Fichteschen Lehre* (7,64–76). For a more overtly speculative employment of the proposition of identity, which draws again heavily on Spinoza, see Schelling’s “On the Essence of Human Freedom” (7,341–47/13–19^{ENG}).

10. Schelling reiterates his critical position on all mediated and conceptual definitions of God; his critique of the so-called rational theology usually centers around Spinoza. See his early publication, *Philosophische Briefe über Dogmatismus und Kriticismus* (1,308–9n./174^{ENG}) as well as the later “Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom” (7,343n./15^{ENG}).

11. See Schelling’s rejection of the “emanation doctrine” in “On the Essence of Human Freedom” (7,355/29^{ENG}).

12. Adam Karl August Eschenmeyer (1768–1852) was trained as a physician; following Schelling’s publication of the *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, Eschenmeyer became quite interested and actively involved in the discourse relating medical, ethical, and natural sciences. According to judgments of contemporaries as well as Schelling’s occasional references to Eschenmeyer’s ideas, his writings seem to have been rather dogmatic and logically weak. Nevertheless, Eschenmeyer wrote several treatises on medical issues as well as a *Psychologie* (1816), a *System der Moralphilosophie* (1818), a multivolume *Religions-philosophie* (1818–24), and a “Fundamentals of the Philosophy of Nature” (*Grundriss der Naturphilosophie*) in 1832.

13. See also Schelling’s essay, *Philosophie und Religion*, also written in 1804, (6,16–70), which takes up related issues. Hegel’s interests, especially between 1800 and 1803, a period culminating in his and Schelling’s collaboration on the *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie*, also address the opposition between “Faith and Knowledge” in his essay so entitled.

14. Schelling’s syntax is somewhat cryptic, asking us not only to reverse the polarities of intuition and understanding as equally capable of self-relation, but furthermore stipulating that, if we are to realize understanding’s analogous capacity for self-reflection, the reversal of terms (from intuition to understanding) also requires a corresponding, albeit indeterminate (note the indefinite article), shift in our own perspective (. . . *nur von einer anderen Seite betrachtet*).

15. Compare note 28 to Schelling's *Treatise Explicatory of the Idealism in the Science of Knowledge* and note 6 to this essay.

16. Although no verbatim text, matching Schelling's quote, could be established, Fichte's "Versuch einer neuen Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre," published by the *Philosophisches Journal* in 1797–98, offers several, closely related paragraphs (I,4: 276–78).

17. Already in his 1797 *Treatise*, translated above, Schelling remarks that "reason is not the supersensible itself but its expression in us" (1,441–42).

18. See Schelling's early essay *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge* (1794), where Schelling elaborates on the concept of the unconditional (1,166 f./74–75^{ENG}).

19. Schelling's formula, "identity of identity," for the Absolute that has been sublated from its "nonground" (*Ungrund*, 7,407–412/87–94^{ENG} [*Of Human Freedom*]) of "indifference" to the status of a self-reflected totality, already occurs in his 1801 *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie* (4,121) and, later, in the first version of his later essay, *Die Weltalter*, ed. H. Fuhrmans (vol I, p. 28). A corresponding passage, though it does not contain the preceding formula verbatim, can be found in a later version of the *Weltalter* fragments that has been translated (vol. I,8,212–17/98–103^{ENG}). In his "Stuttgart Seminars" (7,425), which took place at the time that Schelling began his first sketches on the *Weltalter*, Schelling also refers to this concept as the "unity of unity and opposition"; see the translation of the lectures that follows.

20. The image of the circle, with its periphery and center mutually presupposing, and yet conflicting with, one another structures much of Schelling's elaborations on the relation between man and God in his essay *On the Essence of Human Freedom*.

21. K. F. A. Schelling here makes reference to Schelling's 1806 essay *Philosophie und Religion* (6,50 ff.).

22. K. F. A. Schelling refers to Schelling's *Bruno: Or of The Divine Nature of Things* (I,4,290/187–88^{ENG}).

23. Schelling repeatedly reacts against attempts to label his philosophy a *Pantheism*, which fails to discriminate between "indifference" and "identity" and, as regards the concept of identity itself, between "ground" and "existence." See his *On the Essence of Human Freedom* (7,338–50/9–24^{ENG}).

24. Already in his 1797 *Treatise*, Schelling pointed to the impossibility of a *qualitative* hiatus between the transcendent (God) and the finite order: "if this self-contained being shall influence an outer world, the latter one must itself fall within the range of this [being's] original activity, and the sensible

cannot differ from the supersensible in *kind* but only with respect to its *limitations*" (1,398).

25. Compare the following passage in Schelling's *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (1797), whose second edition Schelling had prepared only shortly before assuming his position at Würzburg: "Every organic product carries the reason of its existence in *itself*, for it is cause and effect of itself. No single part could *arise* except in this whole, and this whole itself consists only in the *interaction* of the parts. In every object the parts are *arbitrary*; they exist only insofar as I *divide*. . . . Thus a concept lies at the base of every organization, for where there is a necessary relation of the whole to the part and of the part to the whole, there is a *concept*. But this concept dwells in the *organization itself*, and can by no means be separated from it" (2,40–41/31^{ENG}). Schelling's 1805 "Aphorisms" for his *Philosophy of Nature*, which in another presentation also constitutes Part II of the present lectures, offer equally concise formulations of the relation between the Absolute as a differential aggregate of "positions" that are, at all times, partially this Absolute itself (i.e., *Seyn*) and, as particulars, finite and temporal nonentities (*Nichtseyn*).

26. Schelling's critique of Fichte's model of reflection, in which the condition of possibility (i.e., the point of *unity*) for reflection is located within an ego consciousness, constitutes a departure from the critical Idealism of Kant and Fichte in a direction other than that eventually proposed by Hegel. Manfred Frank has shown with admirable precision how, following some crucial intellectual leads by Hölderlin, Schelling's critique of reflection forms the foundation for his subsequent philosophical development. See *Der Unendliche Mangel an Sein*, pp. 9–66.

27. The following pages constitute Schelling's most thorough discussion of the term *idea*. See also Schelling's 1800 *System* (3,588–61/176–78^{ENG}) and his *Fernere Darstellungen* (4,347 ff. and 4,405 ff.).

28. The ascending order of epistemological representations was first introduced by Idealism's founding figure, Leibniz. See his "Meditationes de Veritate, Cognitione, atque Ideis," in *Die Philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, ed. C. J. Gerhardt (Reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1960), vol. 4, pp. 422 ff.

29. See note 9. Regarding Schelling's radical rethinking of the concept of reflection, see especially the essay by Klaus Düsing.

30. Schelling's intellectualizing of empirical intuition echoes Fichte's response to Kant's critique of the possibility of an "intellectual intuition" in his "Second Introduction to the *Science of Knowledge*" (1797): "But if anyone should think himself justified . . . in rejecting intellectual intuition, he could with equal justice deny sensory intuition as well, for it too is possible only in

conjunction with the intellectual, seeing that everything that is to be my presentation has got to be related to myself. . . . It is a curious feature of the more recent history of philosophy that everything that can be said against the claim to intellectual intuition also holds against the claim to sensory intuition" (I,4: 217–18/SK, 39). Schelling recognizes the value of this argument for his own concern with the definition of *idea* here and thus argues that an idea can be neither an abstraction nor any other kind of consequence of the Real.

31. This brief remark on the traditional misconception of logic as a discipline grounded in the negation of *being* [*Seyendes*], which lacks the universality of *Being* [*Seyn*], could be seen as a seed of Schelling's eventual critique of Hegel's *Science of Logic* in his 1827 lectures at Munich on the "History of Modern Philosophy." The impact of these lectures on the formation of post-Hegelian, early Marxist thought has been demonstrated by Manfred Frank; see *Der Unendliche Mangel an Sein*.

32. See *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 313–14/310^{ENG}.

33. Variations of this well-known catch phrase of early hermeneutics, i.e., "to understand X better than he understood himself," can be found in the works of Chladenius, Kant, Schlegel, and Schleiermacher. With its disjunction of intentionality and textual performance in the context of interpretation, the expression constitutes a *locus classicus* of early hermeneutic theory. For a discussion of this idea, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1960), pp. 181–185; translated as *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1975), pp. 169–173.

34. Schelling's subsequent remarks constitute his most incisive reflections on the relation between Being, nonbeing, and idea, particular, reality, appearance, etc. Appearance characterizes the status of the particular insofar as it is not being considered with respect to the universe (*All*); hence the particular, if dissociated from its relation to the universe (where its "truth" is being actuated by the infinity of the idea) can also appear as "the concrete, authentic Being," albeit only for the intrinsically inadequate form of reflection (*Reflexion*). Schelling's remarks clarify his earlier discussions in his *Fernere Darstellungen aus dem System der Philosophie* of 1802; see 4,380–92.

35. The parenthesis ends an insertion that begins two paragraphs earlier and is introduced as a recapitulation (*Resumtion*).

36. Regarding the concept of the "Powers," see Schelling's later elaboration of the concept of identity in his Stuttgart Private Lectures, translated next. See also note 6 to that text.

37. Schelling's refusal to develop totality as a process, as is the case with the progressive supersession of "reflexive determinations" in Hegel's

Phenomenology of Spirit, characterizes his altogether different conception of identity. Hegel's movement, with its constant reconfiguration of a natural consciousness and a philosophical consciousness, radicalizes the transcendental conception of "critical" philosophy that he and Schelling had worked out between 1802 and 1803 in the *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie*. Contrastingly, Schelling insists here as elsewhere (see 4,120; 4,250; 6,30–32; 7,242) that identity always already implies the total coinherence of its *opposita*, because any attempt at a progressive deduction of totality would locate its condition of possibility in something for which this totality itself cannot account, namely, in time. See also Horst Fuhrmans, *Schellings Philosophie der Weltalter*, pp. 54–57.

38. The concept of "construction" (*Konstruktion*) in Schelling generally indicates a homology of the universal and the particular, with either domain being essentially the result of a self-construction or self-constitution (i.e., *natura naturans*). All subjective involvement of the inquiring spirit can distort being only if it seeks to impose its own, historically finite, paradigms or "constructions" onto a given field of scientific or philosophical inquiry. See the entry "Konstruktion" in the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. Joachim Ritter et al. (Basel and Stuttgart: Schwabe and Co., 1971–).

Stuttgart Private Lectures

1. Compare Schelling's remarks on the concept of a philosophical system in his 1797 *Treatise* (1,400) and at the beginning of his *System of Philosophy in General* (6,141 ff.), translated earlier.

2. Regarding Schelling's extensive treatment of Fichte's subjective Idealism, see notes 1 and 8 to the previous translation of Schelling's 1804 *System of Philosophy in General*.

3. The undemonstrable nature of God, repeatedly stressed by Schelling, is asserted with particular clarity in his 1802 lectures *On University Studies*: "Since the divine, by its very nature, is neither empirically knowable nor demonstrable, this 'naturalist' school [i.e., of "Higher Biblical Criticism"] had won the game in advance" (5,302/98^{ENG}). See also his *Bruno* (4, 300/196–7^{ENG}).

4. See Plato, *Timaeo*, 32b–c, 41a–d. The bond between essence and existence, which exists in God alone, is explained with particular clarity in the *Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, where Schelling discusses this thesis more strictly with reference to the inherently deficitary constitution of the human subject: "Self-will may seek to be, as a particular will, that which it is only in its identity with the universal will. It may seek to be at the periphery

that which it is only insofar as it remains at the center (just as the quiet will in the calm depth of nature is also universal will precisely because it stays in the depth). . . . Thus there takes place in man's will a division of his spiritualized selfhood from the light (as the spirit stands above the light)—that is, a dissolution of the principles which in God are indissoluble" (7:365/40^{ENG}).

5. Schelling's term *Position*, as Miklos Vetö notes, is generally the equivalent of the Idealist concept of *Setzung*, which turns out to be a fortunate cognate of the translation of the latter term as "positing" by the translators of Fichte's *Science of Knowledge* (Heath and Lachs) and of his *Early Philosophical Writings* (Breazeale), respectively. The concept of the powers (*Potenzen*) predominates as the standard conceptualization of a "quantitative difference" in Schelling's speculative concept of identity. Each individual power (*A* or *B*) in its relation to the $A = A$ of God is characterized by a preponderance of the subjective or the objective factor, which manifests itself in the three spheres of matter, organic life, and intelligence (and does so, in each case, in three distinct forms). Schelling continues to employ the concept throughout the period from 1801 and 1813. For the influence of Schelling's conception on later nineteenth-century philosophy, see the brief remarks in the entry "Potenz, Potenzen" in the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. Joachim Ritter (Basel and Stuttgart: Schwabe and Co., 1971–).

6. On the mystic, theosophist, and kabbalist backgrounds of a self-restriction of God, see Miklos Vetö's long note, *Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen*, p. 243. Schelling's term, *Contraktion*, which I subsequently translate as "concentration," has a rather varied background of application and borrowings in Böhme, Swedenborg, Newton, Lessing, and Goethe.

7. This transition from "essence to existence" contains the seed of Schelling's speculative theory of history as a movement of triadic structure. The thesis of the three "epochs" governs already the last, "practical" section of the *System* (1800), and it is most extensively developed in the 1811–1813 *Ages of the World*. A passage in the early *System* reads: "The third period of history will be that wherein the force which appeared in the earlier stages as destiny or nature has evolved itself as providence. . . . When this period will begin, we are unable to tell. But whenever it comes into existence, God also will then exist" (3:604/212^{ENG}).

In his lectures from Erlangen (1820–21), Schelling elaborates the actualization of what initially appears as the merely speculative identity of the absolute subject and the finite consciousness. Reinvoking the concept of reflection, he observes how "my knowledge does not reorganize itself but is reorganized; each of its figures is but the reflex (the inversion, hence reflection!) of the figure in eternal freedom" (*Initia*, pp. 47 f.) Reflection, then, cannot simply reflect the self for itself but invariably inverts the order of this

very relation; hence Schelling conceives of the aporia of self-reflection, which by virtue of inverting the subject cannot ensure the autonomy of subjective self-knowledge, as the seed of a divine knowledge: “Just as the object is mirrored in water, so the absolute subject stands in an inverted relation to consciousness,” *ibid.*, p. 44. In speaking of the equivalence between the failure of finite, subjective self-reflection and the totality of divine revelation, Schelling repeatedly invokes St. Paul’s expression of “having as though one had not” (1 Cor. 7–29 ff.; see *Initia*, pp. 19, 72). It is due to precisely this asymmetry or inversion that reflection can establish actual knowledge at all. Schelling speaks of this displacement of the reflecting and reflected pole as an ekstasis whereby “our self is placed outside itself,” *ibid.*, p. 39. Reflection thus entails always also abandoning anythetic notion of consciousness [*Selbstaufgegebenheit*] (see M. Frank, *Der Unendliche Mangel an Sein*, pp. 127 ff.).

8. Lines quoted from Goethe’s 1800 sonnet “Natur und Kunst.” The lyric begins with the lines “Natur und Kunst, sie scheinen sich zu fliehen” Goethe, *Werke* (Hamburger Ausgabe, vol. I, p. 245).

9. See note 6.

10. Regarding the speculative identity of necessity and freedom, see Schelling’s much earlier remarks in his 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism* (3,593–96/203–5^{ENG}) and in his *Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom* (7,382–86/59–64^{ENG}): “But what is this inner necessity of the Being itself? This is the point at which necessity and freedom must be united if they can be united at all. If this Being were a dead being and, for man, a mere datum, then since its activity would only ensue from necessity, imputability and all freedom would be vitiated. But just as this inner necessity is itself freedom; man’s being is essentially *his own deed*” (quote from 385/63^{ENG}).

11. Corresponding to the *ordo inversus* of finite self-reflection and the analogous divine “concentration” in the various powers, the later Schelling discriminates—in striking anticipation of the early Walter Benjamin—between an “eternal time” and an “illusory time that ceaselessly repeats itself.” Hence, all historical epochs are but “an epechein, a stalling, a hindering of the true time” (*Initia Philosophiae Universae*, p. 160).

12. See Hippocrates, *Of Divine Illness* “panta theia kai anthropina panta” (Chapter 18).

13. See a cognate passage in Schelling’s early *Treatise Explicatory of the Idealism in the Science of Knowledge* (1,382–83), translated previously.

14. Schelling here begins his elaboration of the concept of nonbeing, which is clearly to be distinguished from the mere nothing. *Nonbeing* designates all “being” (*Seyendes*) that is characterized by its inherent, and as yet

unresolved, struggle between “semblance” (*Schein*) and “Being” (*Seyn*). Nonbeing, then, has only a limited, finite form of being. See Schelling’s multiple references to Nonbeing in the Platonist tradition, the *mē òn* (10, 235), also with a reference to Plutarch in a fragment connected to the *Ages of the World* (8,221).

15. In the posthumous work of Schelling, the following pivotal remark can be found: “Free is only he to whom his entire Being has become a mere tool” (cited in Miklos Vetö, p. 244). See also the consistent brief note in *The Ages of the World* (8, 203n).

16. See Schelling’s note in *Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*: “Augustine says, in opposition to emanation: ‘Naught can come forth out of God’s substance except God; therefore the creature was made out of Nothing, whence its corruptibility and insufficiency result.’ (*De lib. arb.*, L,I, Chapter 2). That ‘Nothing’ has ever since proven to be the crucible of reason. A clue is provided by the scriptural expression: Man is *ek ton mé onton*—man is made out of that which is not, just like the famous *mé on* of the ancients, which like the Creation out of Nothing might first receive a positive meaning through the above distinction” (7,373/49^{ENG})

17. The statue is mentioned in Pausanias’ *Description of Greece* (V, 11), and Schelling himself refers to it once more in his 1817 essay, “Kunstgeschichtliche Anmerkungen zu Johann Martin Wagners Bericht über die Aeginitischen Bildwerke” (9,127).

18. The “absolute A” is here represented as A^3 , and the A being posited in B corresponds to the A^2 in Schelling’s earlier formula.

19. Schelling’s letter to Georgii of February 18, 1810, in which Schelling further elaborates some of his ideas at this point in the lectures, makes it clear that the subsequent sketch of a philosophy of history is pertinent only to the particular question of how the concept of identity has been thought. Noting that “the earlier comparison between Leibniz’s and Fichte’s system with my own has caused me some doubts,” Schelling indicates that he nevertheless did not feel inclined to alter the manuscript (Georgii’s transcription of the lectures) any more, “because that could not be accomplished without considerable elaboration” (Vetö, p. 219). Again, we need to remember that the manuscript to which Schelling makes reference constitutes a transcription of his lectures by Georgii, redacted by Schelling, but eventually lost as part of the Munich *Nachlass* in World War II. The text that Miklos Vetö reproduced in its stead constitutes a copy that Georgii made for his own purposes and of which it cannot be said with certainty whether it was made before or after Schelling reviewed the original transcripts. Schelling’s sketch of the history of the concept of identity in Descartes, Spinoza, and Fichte as it

is printed in the K. F. A. Schelling version of the *Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen*, moreover, remains unaffected by Schelling's own reservations. The most comprehensive account of the relevant aspects of the history of philosophy is, of course, to be found in Schelling's 1827 lectures in Munich (10,1–98).

20. *Hylozoism*: The composite, derived from Gr. *hylē* and *zoion* (matter and life), was introduced into philosophy by Ralph Cudworth in *True Intellectual System of the Universe* (London, 1678). It involves a doctrine ascribed to the older, Ionian school of natural philosophy, whose principal source of transmission we have in Aristotle. According to this doctrine, one basic element accounts, by virtue of its inherent ceaseless dynamism, for the origination of all other being, thus obviating the need for an opposed, complementary, and ordering principle (e.g., a divine intellect). See the entry in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*. Schelling vehemently defended his philosophy of nature against charges of materialist premises with a general statement ("An das Publikum"), published in several daily papers. See the reprint in H. Fuhrmans's edition of *Briefe und Dokumente*, vol. I, p. 324.

21. Compare the well-known passage from the "Preface to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*: "Death, if that is what we want to call this non-actuality, is of all things the most dreadful, and to hold fast what is dead requires the greatest strength. . . . But the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself" *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1952), pp. 29–30/19^{ENG}).

22. Schelling insists that his conception of identity had always been as internally differentiated and that it was always as capable of accounting for the historical and speculative event of negation as Hegel's. The claim appears directed to Hegel, possibly in response to the latter's critical remarks on an undifferentiated concept of "identity" in the *Phenomenology*. Although the question as to whether Hegel was or was not attacking Schelling in his polemic from the "Preface" may not be decidable at this point, it seems worthwhile remarking that Hegel was not directly familiar with Schelling's most thorough and refined thinking of the conception of identity, namely, in the 1804 lectures at Würzburg, because those lectures were not published during Schelling's lifetime. Regarding the general issue of Hegel's critique of Schelling in the "Preface" of the *Phenomenology*, see the introductory essays by George di Giovanni and H. S. Harris in *Between Kant and Hegel*.

23. Schelling's 1804 *System of Philosophy in General* elaborates this issue with great precision; see the preceding text, (54)–(59) (6,209–12).

24. Notwithstanding the latently Fichtean terminology (producer-product, Real-Ideal, active-passive), Schelling's thought does not evolve at the level of a subjectivity that is commensurate with the boundaries of individual consciousness but, instead, designates the condition (i.e., the Absolute Identity) that alone renders possible any transactions between the subjective (Idealist) and the objective (Materialist) traditions of philosophical thought.

25. Regarding the intricate connections between the ancient conception of ether—whose existence Empedocles is said to have denied—as the *quinta essentia* and fire (*Feuer*), “Vesta” (the virgins protective of the Roman fire), “foundation” (*Fundament*), and “fortress” (as in Luther's trope of *feste Burg* for God), see the notes by Miklos Vetö, pp. 246–247.

26. “I considered myself, firstly, as having a face, hands, arms, and the whole machine made up of flesh and bones, such as it appears in a corpse and which I designated by the name of body. . . . If I had wished to explain [the body] according to the notions I had of it, I would have described it in this way: by body, I understand all that can be terminated by some figure; that can be contained in some place and fill a space in such a way that any other body is excluded from it; that can be perceived, either by touch, sight, hearing, taste or smell;” *Meditations*, trans. F. E. Sutcliffe (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970).

27. Vitruvius, *De Architectura*. Schelling remarks that “the principal text on harmony in architecture is by Vitruvius” (5,595). Besides certain general sections in Book I, Schelling might also be thinking of Book III, where Vitruvius discusses the spacial proportions between the columns in a temple. See also Schelling's *Philosophy of Art*: “Architecture, as the music of the plastic arts, thus necessarily follows arithmetical relationships. Since it is music in space, however, in a sense, solidified music, these relationships are simultaneously geometrical relationships. . . . Music, to which architecture corresponds among the various forms of the plastic arts, is freed from the requirement of portraying actual forms of figures, since it portrays the universe in the forms of the first and purest movement, separated from matter” (5,576–77/165–66^{ENG}; see also; 5,590 f./174 f.^{ENG}).

28. Schelling's former friend Paulus, who eventually turned against Schelling during the quarrels between Schelling and the Catholic clergy and administration at the University of Würzburg in 1804, may be the likely target of this critical remark. Accusing Schelling's reflections on God, somewhat incongruously, as a species of mysticism or atheism, Paulus himself spent much of his lecturing on explicating the rational foundation and institutional wisdom of the Catholic church and doctrine. See Aresenij Gulyga, *Schelling*, pp. 171–175.

29. Regarding Schelling's theory of historical periods, see the preceding note. The most extensive discussion of Schelling's *The Ages of the World* (1811/13) where this theory becomes fully developed can be found in H. Fuhrmans's *Schellings Philosophie der Weltalter*.

30. See Schelling's *System des Transzendentalen Idealismus* (1800), where the incompatibility of the state as institution with the absolute is discussed without the emergent, nationalist overtones that begin to dominate the Stuttgart lectures, presumably as a consequence of the Napoleonic wars (3,584–87/196–98^{ENG}).

31. Regarding the frequently argued affinities between the French Revolution and Kant's critical philosophy, see Miklos Vetö's note to this passage, p. 249.

32. Schelling's seemingly trivial and cryptic parenthetical remark may have served to anticipate the counterintuitive argument, viz. that Greece and England—two seemingly functional and long-lasting democratic states—were not constrained to rely on institutional force to the same extent as other nations on account of their geographically sheltered situation.

33. Fichte's essay *Der Geschlossene Handelsstaat*, first published by Cotta in 1800, can be found in a more recent edition of Fichte's *Ausgewählte Politische Schriften*, ed. Zwi Batscha and Richard Saage (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977).

34. See Plato, *The Republic*, 472e–473b.

35. On the concept of revelation, which is undeniably the focus of Schelling's late philosophy, see especially Walter Schulz, *Die Vollendung des Idealismus in der Spätphilosophie Schellings*.

36. A remarkably similar argument would later be advanced by Coleridge in his *On the Constitution of Church and State*.

37. In Part III ("Psychology") of his 1817 *Enzyklopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften*, Hegel also conceives, in remarkable anticipation of Freudian psychoanalysis, desire as the stage of the soul at the threshold toward self-consciousness; see G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke in Zwanzig Bänden*, ed. Rüdiger Bubner and Eva Moldenhauer (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971), vol. 10, pp. 215–216 (§ 426).

38. Compare to the proverbially well-known monologue of Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust*, Part I: "I am the spirit that negates. / And rightly so, for all that comes to be / Deserves to perish wretchedly," trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Anchor Books, 1961), p. 161. ("Ich bin der Geist, der stets verneint . . .") *Werke* (Hamburger Ausgabe), vol. III, p. 47.

39. The statement, supposedly by Aristotle, is quoted in Seneca, *De Tranquillitate Animi*, XVII, 10: “nullum magnum ingenium sine mixtura dementiae fuit” (“no great genius has ever existed without some touch of Madness”). See Aristotle, *Problemata*, 30, 1 and Plato, *Phaedrus*, 245a.

40. Schelling’s somewhat strained and arguably mystical dwelling on a speculative understanding, or “meaning,” of death ought most likely be read with the then very recent biographical circumstances in mind. Moreover, the death of his wife, Caroline, had also been widely, though not always sympathetically, reported in the various circles at Heidelberg, Berlin, Munich, and Weimar, and Jena, where Schelling’s philosophy continued to be actively read and discussed.

41. Schelling is elaborating on his reformulation of the concept of identity introduced earlier; see 7,425–28.

42. Relevant to Schelling’s discussion is his fragmentary dialogue, “Über den Zusammenhang der Natur mit der Geisterwelt,” also published in 1810 (9,1–110).

43. As Miklos Vetö notes, Schelling’s expression of the world as a “stage of mourning” and tragedy for the dramatic performance of the spirit echoes Hamann’s statement that “the creation of the stage relates to the creation of man just as epic poetry relates to dramatic poetry,” *Aesthetica in Nuce* in *Sämtliche Werke* (Vienna, 1951), vol. II, p. 200. For a discussion of Schelling’s earlier observations about history as tragedy, see my remarks in the “Critical Introduction,” which refer primarily to Schelling’s *System* (1800).

44. Schelling may be referring to a passage from The First Epistle General of Peter (1 Peter 1:12): “Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.”

45. See St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, especially 8 on “Life in the Spirit” (Romans 8:19–21).

APPENDIX

Excursus: Schelling in the Work of S. T. Coleridge

The impact of Schelling's philosophy on the work of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834) has received extensive philological and interpretive attention ever since Thomas De Quincey opened the agonizing debate concerning Coleridge's plagiarisms in his *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* article of 1834–35.¹ The following remarks merely aim at identifying the specific locations in Coleridge's work where Schelling is being discussed explicitly or where he is being incorporated into Coleridge's philosophical arguments. The main discussions of Schelling in relation to Coleridge, with the laudable exception of Thomas McFarland's earlier work, tend to be philological, concentrating on the plagiarisms, albeit without accounting to any significant extent for Coleridge's philosophical aims—as such radically different from Schelling's concerns—in support of which Schelling's writings are being invoked by Coleridge, particularly in his *Biographia Literaria*.² To be sure, with its often stunning contradictions, its hybrid intellectual pretensions and sudden evasions, Coleridge's intellectual profile has thus far prevented any persuasive and comprehensive characterization of his philosophy; nevertheless—this being the principal shortcoming of any unilateral focus on the question of plagiarism—discussions of that issue from J. F. Ferrier to Norman Fruman continue to presuppose a modern, highly regulated system of intellectual ownership and exchange and, by extension, an orderly and consistently reflexive intentionality of scholarly or philosophical thought.³ Needless to say, even the most casual inquiry into Coleridge's psychology, his erratic intellectual preoccupations, with their continuous shifts between private and public modes of writing and, finally, the shifting standards of scholarship during his time, all mitigate strongly against such a presupposition. Any inquiry into the extent, intellectual significance, and most important, into the philosophical consequences of Coleridge's indebtedness to Schelling will thus have to begin with a careful reexamination of the primary textual evidence. Here, then, follows a brief reiteration of the documented way stations of Coleridge's excursions into German Idealism.

Schelling's philosophy enters the text of Coleridge only in consequence of the latter's absorbing interest in Kant and the emergent systematic treatises

of early German Idealism, beginning roughly in 1797. Already in May 1796, in a letter to Thomas Poole, Coleridge briefly and characteristically elaborates on two prospective schemes, “the first impracticable—the second not likely to succeed.” The first concerns his desire to translate all of Schiller’s then extant works and, among various other inquiries into German learning, to read “Kant, the great German Metaphysician.”⁴ Between late 1796, when Coleridge still can only allude to the fame of Kant in Germany by qualifying him as “the most unintelligible Emanuel Kant” (CL I, 284), and early 1801, when references to Kant and Idealism begin to resurface in his letters, there is little material base for any speculation regarding the degree of his acquaintance with German Idealism.⁵ By March 1801, however, he remarks on having been preoccupied with “the most intense study” in the course of which “I have not only completely extricated the notions of Time and Space; but have overthrown the doctrine of Association, as taught by Hartley” (CL, II, 706). Without doubt, Kant’s philosophy proved the most significant resource for Coleridge’s philosophical interests, even more so than Schelling. Indeed, only Kant’s philosophy would accompany Coleridge’s discursive as well as technical writings throughout his entire career, such as its repeated, if incidental, invocation in Coleridge’s serial *The Friend* (1809–10) and its grounding function for the 1820–21 manuscripts, recently published as the *Logic*.⁶ In contrast to Schelling’s work, Kant’s writings were repeatedly and emphatically acknowledged by Coleridge to have been of crucial influence on his philosophical speculations, particularly in the *Biographia*.⁷

Evidently, these readings also involved the study of Fichte, of whose lectures he may have known as early as 1796, when proposing a visit “to Jena—a cheap German University” (CL, I, 209). A notebook entry from early 1801, links two lines from Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey” to Fichte’s famous classroom experiment in which he exhorted his students to “think” their “I.”⁸ For Coleridge, however, Fichte’s philosophy would never attain the importance nor command the respect that the works of Kant and Schelling were to achieve.⁹ Still, for the time being, specifically between 1801 and 1804, readings in Kant as well as in the early Idealist writings of Fichte and Jacobi continued at intervals, and it is during this period that Coleridge’s letters, notebooks, and marginalia began to build toward what, eventually, would constitute the most incisive and significant, if scattered, body of contemporary, textual commentary on German Idealism in any foreign language.¹⁰

The emergence of Schelling’s philosophy into Coleridge’s intellectual sphere cannot be traced quite as accurately as that of Schelling’s predecessors. Although the first reference to Schelling in Coleridge’s letters does not occur until late 1813, such silence must not be lightly construed as proof that Coleridge was not acquainted with Schelling’s works. Already in his famous notebook entry of 1804, Coleridge ponders the prospect of plagiarism charges

as he surveys the extent of his intellectual debts to German Idealism: "In the Preface of my *Metaphys. Works* I should say—Once & all read Tetens, Kant, Fichte, &c—& there you will trace or if you are on the hunt, track me" (*Notebooks*, II, # 2375). Whether the "&c" was meant to cover Schelling's works, we cannot say for sure. By 1813, however, Coleridge's interest in writing a major philosophical work, prompted him to request from Henry Crabb Robinson, perhaps the only other genuine British reader of German Idealism at the time, a copy of Fichte's [and Niethammer's] *Philosophisches Journal*, to be accompanied, if possible, by Schelling's *Methodologie* [i.e., *On University Studies*, (CL, III, 461)]. The journal, of course, contained the first version of Schelling's *Abhandlungen*, contained in this translation. By 1815, Coleridge's acquaintance with Schelling's works, of which he owned volume 1 of the 1809 *Gesammelte Schriften* (which contained the early writings of Schelling) as well as the *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), was very considerable in range and depth.¹¹

Coleridge's acknowledgment of his debts to Schelling usually comes with heavy qualifications attached, the most popular variant of which has him insist that he could not acknowledge the "glaring multitude of resemblances without a lie/for they had been mine, formed, & full formed in my own mind, before I had ever heard of these Writers [Tetens, Kant, Fichte, &c]" (*Notebooks*, II, # 2375).¹² Other, scrupulously qualified intimations of intellectual and textual debt recur throughout the first volume of the *Biographia*, such as Coleridge's notation of the "pleasure of sympathy," his prevaricating remark that "veracity does not consist in saying, but in the intention of communicating the truth," his notation of a "genial coincidence" and, of course, his famous characterization of truth as a "divine ventriloquist" (*BL*, I, 147, 157, 160, 164). The particular details of how Coleridge incorporated Schelling's *Treatise* (1797) and *System* (1800), as well as occasional quotations from *Bruno* and *On University Studies*, into the *Biographia* have been rehearsed elsewhere and need not be repeated at this point.¹³ The most substantial portions of Schelling's writings will be found in Chapters 8, 9, and especially 12 of the *Biographia*, with the text of Schelling's *Treatise* (1797) being as prominent a source as Schelling's *System* (1800). Notwithstanding his numerous, lengthy and unreferenced borrowings from Schelling, Coleridge would repeatedly acknowledge his extensive textual debts to Schelling, if only in highly general terms: "To Schelling we owe the completion, and the most important victories, of this revolution in philosophy. To me it will be happiness and honor enough, should I succeed in rendering the system itself intelligible to my countrymen" (*BL*, I, 163).¹⁴

Coleridge's *Biographia* was harshly reviewed on account of its metaphysical indulgences, and in subsequent years, Coleridge himself grew increasingly critical of Schelling's philosophy.¹⁵ His *Philosophical Lectures*, although invoking what resembles a vaguely Idealist conception of history

as drama—"one cannot help thinking, provided the mind is beforehand impressed with a belief of a providence guiding this great drama of the world to its conclusion, that as opposites are in a constant tendency to union . . . a certain unity is to be expected from the very circumstance of opposition"—studiously ignore the extensive and indeed pivotal contribution of Idealism to Coleridge's own philosophical evolution.¹⁶ Toward the end of his lectures, which Coleridge delivered in London between December 1818 and March 1819, he declines any more extensive treatment of Schelling:

My time will not permit me to enter into any account of [Schelling] as I intended, but in truth I should be puzzled to give you a true account. For I might at one time refer you to Kant, and then I should say what [Schelling] appears at one time; another time to Spinoza, as applied to <another aspect of> his philosophy; and then again I should find him in the writings of Plotinus, and still more of Proclus, but most in the writings of a Jesuit who opposed the Protestants . . . (PL, 390–91).

The assumption, apparently instilled by Henry Crabb Robinson, that Schelling had converted to Catholicism is, of course, wrong, yet it coincides with some of Coleridge's increasingly negative comments on Schelling's philosophy as a whole, itself at least in part a consequence of Coleridge's own, increasingly orthodox conception of religion.¹⁷ Already a year earlier, in a letter to J. H. Green of December 13, 1817, Coleridge notes that

Schelling's Theology and Theanthroposophy the telescopic Stars and nebulae are too many for my 'grasp of eye' (n.b. the catachresis is Dryden's not mine). In short, I am half inclined to believe that both he and his friend Francis Baader are but half in earnest—and paint the veil to hide not *the face* but the *want* of one. Schelling is too ambitious, too eager to be the Grand Seignior of the allein seligmachende Philosophie, to be altogether a trustworthy Philosopher. (CL, IV, 792)¹⁸

Schelling himself, it should be noted, would in later years refer at least twice to Coleridge by name, in one case expressly defending him against the charge of plagiarism. Thus, in his lectures on the *Philosophy of Mythology*, first prepared in 1828 and last held in 1845–46 (though published posthumously), he remarks on Coleridge as "the first of his countrymen who grasped and sensibly employed German poetry and science, yet in particular philosophy."

Commenting on Coleridge's reception of Schelling's *The Deities of Samothrace* (1815) and, in particular, on Coleridge's coinage of "tautegorical" for the coincidence of being and meaning in the divine representations of antiquity, he continues:

On account of the above-mentioned, precise expression [tautegorical] I will gladly allow for the unacknowledged borrowings [*Entlehnungen*] from my writings for which he has been severely, indeed too severely criticized by his fellow countrymen. A truly congenial man ought not to be held accountable for such matters. Nevertheless, the rigor of such criticisms in England certainly confirms how much stress is being placed in that country on scientific protocol, and how strictly the concept of intellectual property [*suum cuique*] in the sciences is being honored there.¹⁹

In addition to displaying a generosity of spirit that, to be sure, Schelling was not always willing to extend to his German counterparts, the remark also reinforces what some scholars, in particular Thomas McFarland, have argued all along; namely, Coleridge's fascination with Schelling was fundamentally an act of projection—to borrow a Freudian concept—of intellectual desires and motifs onto a figure endowed with both, the authority and (equally necessary) the remoteness to Coleridge's audience so as not to interfere with the latter's fundamentally divergent intellectual agenda. Needless to say, it is all but impossible to characterize Coleridge's ambitions as a critic with any degree of accuracy in the few remarks for which there is space here. Minimally, however, they can be said to aim at outlining a projected, spiritual, and discursive culture and its high priests (the "Clerisy") in which a finite, material, and discursive imagination and an infinite, ontological-divine imagination or desire were to exist in eventual harmony.²⁰ Any genuine theoretical understanding of the reach—and the limits—of Coleridge's debt to Schelling, moreover, will have to account for how a tangential, fleeting, and sharply demarcated moment of intellectual contact with Schelling would enable Coleridge's *Biographia* to reinvest the principal debt—i.e., a metaphysical "grounding" of the imagination—in a highly detailed and materially sensitive analysis of the finite verbal art of Wordsworth's early Romanticism. In opting for a critical application of Schelling's metaphysics, and thus deciding against the temptation of their *consummation* in the project of a "philosophy of art" (such as Schelling himself had undertaken in 1805), Coleridge ultimately reaffirms his fundamentally different intellectual sensibility, one far more inclined to start out deductively, beginning with the micromanagement of empirical phenomena, rather than descending from those remote and uncertain "stars and nebulae" of transcendent ideas.²¹

Notes

1. "Samuel Taylor Coleridge," reprinted in *Recollections of the Lakes and the Lake Poets*, ed. David Wright (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970).

2. See Thomas McFarland, *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); Norman Fruman, *Coleridge, The Damaged Archangel* (New York: George Braziller, 1971); and Gian N. G. Orsini, *Coleridge and German Idealism* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969). All three texts will subsequently be cited parenthetically in this appendix.

3. J. F. Ferrier, "The Plagiarisms of S. T. Coleridge," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 47 (1840). See also McFarland's discussion of Ferrier, pp. 3-6.

4. *Collected Letters*, ed. Leslie Griggs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956) vol. I. p. 209. Henceforth cited parenthetically as CL, followed by roman volume and arabic page numbers. For other references to Kant, see also *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957-), vol. I, # 1517; vol. II, # 2151, 2316, 2375, 2598, 2663, and 2666.

5. On the early speculations of Coleridge, see Orsini, pp. 3-56. Richard Holmes, in his recent, excellent biography of the early Coleridge, affords the topic only scant and fleeting treatment. See *Coleridge: Early Visions* (New York: Viking, 1990), p. 117n.

6. See *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, general ed. Kathleen Coburn (Princeton; N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), vols. 4 and 13.

7. *Biographia Literaria* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), vol. I, pp. 153, 297. Henceforth cited as BL.

8. *Notebooks*, vol. I, # 921. For background on how Coleridge may have learned of this notorious act of pedagogy, see Orsini, pp. 180 ff. See also Coleridge's letter to Dorothy Wordsworth, CL, II, 674.

9. See BL, I, 158; 163. See also letters cited in note 12.

10. See *Notebooks*, vol. II, # 2382, where Coleridge examines and critiques Fichte's concept of the "act" [*Tathandlung*] with great acumen and subtlety. See also *Notebooks*, vol. III, # 3276 and 4307. With the recent publication of the first three of a projected five volumes of Coleridge's *Marginalia*, we have now access to the definitive text of his marginal notes on Boehme, Fichte, Hegel, Herder, Jacobi, Kant, Maass, Schelling,

Schleiermacher, and Tetens. *Marginalia*, ed. Kathleen Coburn and H. J. Jackson (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980–). With vol. 4 of the *Marginalia* having not yet been published, the seemingly most complete printing of Coleridge's marginal notes on Schelling can be found in *The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Shedd (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1858), vol. III, pp. 691–712.

11. See Orsini, pp. 192 ff.; McFarland, pp. 1–52; and Walter J. Bate and James Engell, in their "Introduction" to *BL*, I, cxiv ff. Norman Fruman's exacting, at times philistine, "tracking" of Coleridge's plagiarisms constitutes a factitious argument only by persistently eliding the question concerning the function and import of Schelling's text in Coleridge's argument in the *Biographia*. It is apparent, and has been pointed out by McFarland, that Coleridge's intellectual orientation is fundamentally different from that of Schelling. References to Coleridge's efforts at purchasing books by Schelling can be found in *CL*, IV, 663–68, 738, and 883.

12. For similar versions of this disclaimer, see *CL*, IV, 775: "as Wordsworth, Southey, and indeed all my intelligent Friends well know & attest, I had formed it [viz. the philosophy of Life] during the study of Plato, . . . long before Schelling had published his first and imperfect view—." Again, in December 1819, "As my opinions were formed before I was acquainted with the Schools of Fichte and Schelling, so do they remain independent of them: tho' I con- and pro-fess great obligations to them in the development of my Thoughts" (*CL*, IV, 792–93). See also *CL*, IV, 874; and *BL*, I, 160–65.

13. See Orsini, pp. 218–221; Fruman, 83–107, 168–169, and 201–6; and McFarland's entire study on *Coleridge and the Pantheist Tradition*. See also the breakdown of Coleridge's more or less unacknowledged borrowings from Schelling's works, *BL*, vol. II, 253–45.

14. For other acknowledgments of Schelling's contributions to the *Biographia*, see *BL*, I, 147; 161; 244.

15. See Bate and Engell's "Introduction" to *BL*, pp. lxv–lxvi and the notes there.

16. *Philosophical Lectures*, ed. Kathleen Coburn (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), p. 87. Henceforth cited as *PL*.

17. Henry Crabb Robinson (1775–1867) continued to be a reliable and often helpful friend to Coleridge, particularly during the latter's serious illness, in consequence of his attempts at overcoming his opium addiction in 1814. Robinson's interest in philosophy, particularly German Idealism, emerges in his mostly incidental writings; see *Crabb Robinson on Books and*

Their Writers, ed. Edith J. Morley, 3 vols. (London, 1938) and *Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of Crabb Robinson*, ed. Thomas Sadler, 3 vols. (London, 1869).

18. See also his subsequent, most extensive critical assessment of Schelling in another letter to Green, September 29, 1818 (CL, IV, 873–76). It is most likely during this period, roughly 1816–19, that Coleridge annotates several of Schelling's works, to which he added the *Deities of Samothrace*. See his marginal notes on Schelling, printed in Shedd's 1858 edition of Coleridge's *Complete Works*, vol. III. A preliminary survey of all marginal annotations to Schelling can be found in Kathleen Coburn's notes to *PL*, 464–65, n. 36.

19. "Introduction" to the *Philosophy of Mythology* in *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. XI, p. 196. See also his brief mention of Coleridge at the end of the twelfth lecture, vol. XI, p. 294.

20. I am, of course, in part alluding to Coleridge's famed, if puzzling distinction between the primary and secondary imagination in Chapter 13 of the *Biographia*.

21. As an instance of how to approach Coleridge's clearly heterogeneous theory of imagination and poetry, see Jérôme Christensen, *Coleridge's Blessed Machine of Language* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980).

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Editions and Translations of Critical and Idealist Philosophy

This section includes texts closely related to Schelling's work or referred to in the annotations to the translations; regarding the generally parenthetical mode of citation of these texts, see the List of Abbreviations. Texts concerning the reception of Schelling's work by Samuel Taylor Coleridge are referenced separately in the "Excursus."

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Thomas Pfau is Assistant Professor of English at Duke University. He is the editor and translator of *Friedrich Hölderlin: Essays and Letters on Theory*, also published by SUNY Press.

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